Class BX9943

Book .B4V6

PRESENTED BY

No. 253.

Hosea Ballou.

A

VOICE

TO

UNIVERSALISTS.

BY HOSEA BALLOU.

"Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf." Job 39: 2.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY J. M. USHER.
CINCINNATI:
J. A. GURLEY.
1851.

BX9943
.B4V6

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1849, by
JAMES M. USHER,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

Gift
Burbank Smith
Sept. 5, 1928

Stereotyped by
HOBART & ROBBINS,
NEW ENGLAND TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDERY,
BOSTON.

Dedication.

THIS VOLUME IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO ALL THE BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION, AND TO ALL WHO BELIEVE IN THAT DIVINE DOCTRINE, AS REVEALED THROUGH OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, AND RECORDED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

BY THEIR VERY HUMBLE AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,

HOSEA BALLOU.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
A General Epistle to Universalists,	13
Momentous Questions,	23
A Short Essay on Universalism,	25
Advice to Young Men,	38
A Sermon,	55
A Sermon,	78
The Doctrine of Universal Salvation,	96
Remarks offered at a Religious Conference,	109
The Utility of Evil,	115
Examination of Dr. Channing's Discourse on the Evil of Sin,	127
Salvation Irrespective of Character,	179
Human Ability in relation to Gospel Salvation,	190
The Value of Good Works,	204
Advice to Young People,	212
Salvation by Grace,	221
Necessity and Free-Will,	230
The Right Motive,	238
Progression,	246
Will men sin after they are Dead?	254

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

The work, here laid before the public, consists partly of original pieces written by Mr. Ballou for this volume, and partly of articles from his pen which have already appeared in different periodicals. To the former class belong A General Epistle to Universalists, Momentous Questions, Essay on Universalism, Advice to Young Men who design to enter the Ministry, The Doctrine of Universal Salvation, and The Utility of Evil. The latter class is made up of such selections, from his writings, as it was thought desirable to preserve in a more permanent form than that in which they first appeared.

One object with the Publisher was to call forth, from the venerable Author, some new contributions to the great cause to which he has devoted his life; some additional counsels, which his brethren may receive as a legacy, and some fresh testimony which the world may regard as the maturest dictate of long experience and reflection. His advanced age forbids

the hope that he will many times again address the public in this way; and the latest thoughts and sentiments of such a man, on topics of so much moment as those which are here discussed, will be felt to claim respectful attention with all candid minds.

He is now in his seventy-ninth year, and in the fifty-ninth of his ministry, having begun to preach in the autumn of 1791. His first settlement, as a pastor, was in 1796, over the Universalist Society in Dana, Mass. From this place he removed, in 1803, to Barnard, Vt., and took the charge of the Universalist societies in that town, in Woodstock, Hartland, Bethel, and Bridgewater. After continuing there about six years, he accepted a settlement, in 1809, with the church in Portsmouth, N. H. In 1815, he was called to the church in Salem, Mass.; and thence, in Dec. 1817, to the Second, or School Street, Universalist Church, in Boston, with which he is still connected as senior pastor.

This is no place, nor time, to speak of the peculiar endowments which have distinguished him from the first, and which yet continue in a great measure unimpaired. It will be no indelicacy, however, to recognize (what is universally conceded) his fatherly relation to the present body of believers in the salvation of all mankind, and his paramount agency in spreading

this doctrine. He has lived to see the number of its professors increased from a few thousands to nearly as many hundreds of thousands. That faith, which was everywhere held in abomination at his entrance in the field, has also diffused its elements at least into all the old forms of religious belief, and sensibly modified even the popular creed. The character of Universalism itself has been renovated under his eye. Almost half a century ago, it began to cast its old Calvinistic slough; and it went on to develop itself more nearly according to the simplicity of the Scriptures. In all this progress, of various kinds, external and internal, he has borne the leading part. Besides the immediate results of his preaching, writings, and conversation, he has furnished much of the solid material which others have wrought out into current use, and, in many cases, has given the impulse and general direction of thought to those who have come to different conclusions from his own on subordinate points. It is not extravagant to say, in general terms, that what Universalism now is, and what its influence now is on the religious world, is owing, under God, to him.

Should it be asked, how he has been enabled to accomplish so much in his Master's cause, the answer will be very important to such as would share in usefulness of this permanent kind. So far as human

means are concerned, he has done it by rigorously "minding his own business;" by concentrating all his powers upon the work; by consecrating himself, his time, his reputation, all that he had, to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, disregarding men's abuse or favor, and speaking in the plainest simplicity the message of which his heart was full. This is the secret of success, with those who have a dispensation of the gospel committed to them. Without this, the most splendid talents will leave no more lasting effects behind, than does the morning cloud, or the dew that vanishes under the heat and burden of the day.

J. M. USHER.

Boston, Aug. 1849.

A GENERAL EPISTLE

TO UNIVERSALISTS.

To the numerous fraternity of believers in universal salvation, through Him who gave himself a ransom for all men, pursuant to the will of God, who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; and to all who call on the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whithersoever this epistle may come: — Brethren, will you listen to the beseechings of your aged servant in Christ, who has long endeavored to serve you for Jesus' sake?

All favors bestowed by the Giver of every good gift, and every perfect gift, impose corresponding duties and obligations on those who receive them. By what means, let your servant ask, were your minds enlightened, and brought out of darkness into the glorious light of universal love? You answer, By carefully and prayerfully searching the Scriptures. In what estimation, then, should you hold these Scriptures, which have granted

you this deliverance from the gloomy horrors of never-ending woes? Does the Bible contain the divine promise, that in the seed of Abraham, which seed is Christ, all the nations, all the families, all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed? Does the Bible teach that the one Mediator between God and men gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time; that God has made known his purpose, that, in the fulness of the dispensation of times, he will gather together all things in Christ; and that he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will? And does it teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world? And do the Scriptures teach us all things which pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue? If these things be so, allow your aged servant to beseech you to hold the Scriptures in that high regard, which corresponds with the blessings you receive from them.

Are there no reasons to fear, that the blessed oracles of divine truth are less read and less

regarded than they ought to be? Have not some of the professed preachers of the gospel manifested more regard for what is called science, than for the plain declarations of the Divine Word? And have they not been too much countenanced in this course by their hearers? A word to the wise is sufficient. Be exhorted, brethren, to regard the apostle's solicitude, who feared, that as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, his brethren's minds would become corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ. Are there no grounds to fear, that some, who have been open advocates of divine truth, have, in some measure, yielded to the popular influence exerted to dissuade them from its open defence, in hope of amalgamating with such as are so very liberal as to define no belief whether the will of our heavenly Father in man's final salvation will be accomplished or not? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." It seems hardly necessary, brethren, to exhort you to beware of that meteor called Christianity, which is not founded on Christ; which does not

acknowledge the reality of the wonderful works done by him; which would lose none of its authority by dispensing with Christ, his death and resurrection. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." Under pretence of progress, it seems that some have come to the conclusion, that they must leave the Scriptures, Christ and his apostles, all which only served for their times, and go on to perfection, adopting as a motto, *Upward and onward!* If, in room of leaving the Scriptures, they would only leave the false doctrines to whose support they have been erroneously applied, no fault could be imputed to their progress.

Your aged servant would call your very serious attention to the consideration of the Christian Sabbath, and the devotional services it requires. That the observance of the Sabbath, for the purposes of public devotion, is of indispensable necessity, it would seem no professed Christian could doubt. It is evident, according to the New Testament, that soon after the resurrection of the divine Master, the apostles, and all who believed on Jesus, met on the first day of every week for

the purpose of divine worship; and there is no doubt, but they chose that day because it was the day on which Jesus arose from the dead. In view of these momentous facts, does it not appear most reasonable, that all Christians, in all ages, should, as far as circumstances and means will permit, follow so good an example? Though there seems no probability that this custom will be soon wholly discontinued, we have, even now, and in our populous cities, where the people have every needed convenience for attending public worship on the Sabbath, reason to fear that many neglect this privilege; and that among this class are such whose example has an influence on others, thereby depriving them of those enjoyments, which none can well do without, and which are especially needed by the poor. Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation, not to neglect the assembling of yourselves together. Can any of you, rich or poor, seriously persuade yourselves, that it is better for you, and for your neighbors, and for your families, that you stay at home, and not attend public worship on the Sabbath? According to the influence your

example will exert in community, are the demands of community on you for such examples as may prove a blessing to others. Our time being short, let it be wisely improved. Who of us will regret, at the close of life, that we have devoted too many Sabbaths to the worship of God in public? Or who of us will not, at that period, be thankful for all the opportunities we shall have faithfully improved, in worshipping God in spirit and in truth?

As it is undoubtedly the case, with many believers in the doctrine of universal salvation, that they are, in many places, but few in number, and not able to be at the expense of a meeting-house, or of maintaining a public preacher, they may think it their duty to attend, with their families, public worship where a partial gospel is preached, and universal salvation proscribed. To such, it may be said, "Wisdom is profitable to direct." All circumstances must be taken into the account. How many true believers are there, who can meet together? Two or three have the promise of the divine presence. Let them meet in the private dwelling of some brother, who can

best accommodate such as will attend. Let the Bible be the minister. Read some portions of Scripture; converse on them; and, if convenient, sing hymns, &c. In all parts of our country now good sermons are in print, and might be read to edification in very small assemblies. By such meetings, some, who do not believe, may be induced to drop in, and inquire after truth. From such meetings, large societies of our common faith had their origin; and the oldest members thereof have confessed that their early meetings were among those which they best enjoyed. Let all who wish well to Zion, remember her in her low estate.

The establishment of churches, and the attendance on the Lord's supper, are privileges which ought not to be neglected. Could the prejudices of the people all be removed in regard to church membership, and the Lord's supper, and the more rational practice of the first Christian believers be adopted, it would, no doubt, much improve our Christian communion and fellowship. All who were converts to Christianity, were as freely admitted to the celebration of the supper, as they

were to the public services of devotion. Indeed, the supper was one part of public service. What good reason can be assigned why three quarters of a Christian congregation, after joining in the prayers and praises offered in the sanctuary, and after listening to a fervent dispensation of the words of everlasting life, retire from the house of worship, and leave the other fourth to celebrate the death of Jesus, in which the whole congregation believe? If the death of Jesus be allowed to benefit all, should not all join in its celebration? Community at large join in celebrating the day of our national independence; and the fact that this independence is a benefit to all, justifies the whole community in so doing. But, brethren, your servant, who offers advice, assumes no right to command. The apostle says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

Among all the great subjects embraced in the circle of Christian duties, none can have a greater claim on parents, than the bringing up of their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Be exhorted, therefore, by the love of

Christ to little children, and by your own most tender affection for your offspring, to neglect no opportunity or means which may be employed in promoting this object. The young and tender heart, like the pliant wax, is susceptible of any impression. How indispensable, then, is it, that the divine image should be as constantly before the mind of childhood as is possible! The more love is infused into the heart of the child, the more will that heart manifest the divine image. And the rule will hold good, in relation to this duty of parents, as in relation to all other duties, "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap." Parents in general, who have disobedient, ill-natured, and quarrelsome children, have used unreasonable severity with them, endeavoring to overcome evil with evil. The doctrine of Jesus should be taught to children while quite young. There is scarcely anything more easily taught. To render good for evil, is the essence of the doctrine which Jesus taught and practised. In any instance in which chastisement is required, the child should be made to understand that it is inflicted for its good.

The widely-spread custom of Sabbath schools, and the liberal patronage which is granted them, furnish wonderful facilities for the religious and moral culture of children. The writer of these suggestions was at Salem a few days since, at the Massachusetts Sabbath School Anniversary, where the many lovely children made a most charming display, and sang the praises of God with well-disciplined voices. The scene called up the comparison of these times with those fifty years ago, and it was believed, that fifty years, as well improved in future, would accomplish the divine promise, that all Zion's children shall be taught of the Lord, and that their peace shall be great. Parents and guardians would do well to give to children of their care all those multiplied advantages which distinguish our times.

Superintendents and teachers in Sabbath schools, are entitled to much gratitude for their faithful services, and it is hoped that their own religious and moral improvement will prove a rich reward, in connection with the happy reflection that they have watered and nurtured many pleasant plants, which flourish in the garden of God.

If, by the foregoing suggestions and advice, any minds should be induced to a serious consideration of the duties mentioned, and any service thereby result to the cause of truth, of pure and undefiled religion, and of humanity, it will show that, by God's blessing, small means may redound to his honor. The writer could not persuade himself that more than a few hints on the several subjects which have been noticed, could be required of him, or be of any essential benefit to his readers.

MOMENTOUS QUESTIONS.

1st. If the Divine Being inspired the prophets to foretel events, involving what would be brought to pass by the schemes planned by kings, and executed by armies under their command, was it possible that such events could have been prevented by human agency?

2d. If we allow that God, by his Holy Spirit, moved the prophet Isaiah to point out the sufferings of the Messiah, as we read in his fifty-third chapter, can we reasonably believe, that, by any

human agency, those sufferings could have been prevented?

3d. Can we reasonably believe, and on rational grounds defend the belief, that Peter was possessed of an agency by which he could have avoided denying his Master, as Jesus told him he would?

4th. If we allow that Jesus Christ appeared to Saul, for the purpose of his conversion to Christianity, and to make him a minister and a witness of gospel truth to the Gentiles, can we reasonably believe that it was possible, by any agency which Saul possessed, to have prevented his conversion, or have avoided his ministry?

5th. Have we any reason to believe that Saul was possessed of any freedom of will, which was violated by the action of that power by which he was converted?

By stating these questions, we wish not to puzzle the mind of any one; but, believing as we do that the great subject embraced in them is not generally understood as it ought to be, it is hoped that, by calling attention to it, some useful inquiry will thereby be induced.

A SHORT ESSAY ON UNIVERSALISM.

We propose, in what we shall say in the few following pages, on the subject of Universalism, to offer a few suggestions on several subjects which relate to the doctrine, considered as a system of theology, which distinguishes its believers, as a sect, from Christians of other denominations, and also in regard to some of the different views which have been entertained respecting the doctrine, by those who have professed and defended it. And,

1st. As respects the one central idea, in which all, who have ever professed to believe the doctrine, have agreed. This great and paramount idea embraces the final end of all sin in the human family, and the consequent holiness and happiness of all men. We deem it proper to consider all who embrace this one item of faith as Universalists, however they may differ in regard to the ways and means which have been,

or may be, used to carry into effect the desired and glorious result; or however they may differ as to times and seasons in which Divine wisdom may accomplish it. This item of faith evidently distinguishes all its advocates from all who believe that any of the human family will sin and suffer as long as the Creator shall exist.

2d. There is another item in the belief entertained by Universalists, in which all its advocates are agreed. And that is, that this great and glorious truth has its origin in the nature of God, and is a necessary result flowing from all the Divine attributes, which harmonize in infinite, unchangeable love. As it is manifestly unreasonable to suppose that there can exist in any one of the Divine attributes a tendency which conflicts with that of any other attribute, so is it equally unreasonable to allow that Divine justice can require any punishment or retribution which Divine love does not desire. That the good of the subject is the object, is the necessary conclusion.

3d. All Universalists agree in the belief, that their distinguishing doctrine is plainly taught by

Divine inspiration, in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; and, of course, they do not believe that the inspired Scriptures anywhere express a contrary doctrine. They find this doctrine in the writings of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms; and most clearly set forth in the teachings of Jesus and his apostles. The very spirit of the gospel of the Son of God is that of love to enemies, and the rendering of good for evil. And,

4th. All Universalists agree in believing that the true Christian life consists in possessing, living, and acting the spirit of love, as manifested in the life and teachings of the Divine Master. And however we may fail, or come short of this rule, even our delinquencies admonish us of its purity, and compel us to acknowledge it.

Having presented the reader with a short compendium of the articles of our faith, in which Universalists are agreed, we propose to set forth a concise view of some of the most important differences in the opinions which have been embraced by believers in the before-mentioned essential particulars.

It would not be consistent with our present purpose, or with the limits prescribed to these pages, to go back to the early ages of the church, and inquire into the particular tenets of those learned divines who were believers in this doctrine, and who taught it in the schools. Some of those, having imbibed many notions taught by Grecian philosophers, thought it consistent with Christianity to retain many heathen opinions, and exerted more labor, learning and criticism, to reconcile the ancient mythology with Christianity, than to understand and teach the doctrine of Jesus in its simplicity. What we now propose to do is to take somewhat of a general survey of the opinions entertained by those who, within the memory of living men, have believed and taught Universalism. As this doctrine was first taught in this country, its general aspect indicated that it had what we may call a Calvinistic base! A work entitled "Calvinism Improved," designed to vindicate Universalism, was not very essentially different from the views of our Universalists in general fifty years ago. As the basis of Calvinism is generally understood, we need not describe its

elements. Simply to improve it, so as to establish Universalism on it, requires only to extend the merciful decrees of God, which Calvin restricted to a part of the human family, so as to embrace the whole, and do the same with the vicarious atonement made by the Son of God, which Calvin confined to a chosen part. When a Calvinist found that the Scriptures plainly teach that the Saviour gave himself a ransom for all men, having, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, it was easy for him to see the impropriety of believing that God had, from all eternity, doomed any to endless woe. It does not appear that our earliest Universalists doubted that man, by sin, had incurred the just penalty of endless punishment, but fully relied on the efficacy of the atonement for a deliverance of all men from such a condemnation. The doctrine of the Trinity was also held as an essential part of the general system of doctrine. The great idea of universal salvation filled its believers so full of joy, giving such an impetus to benevolence and love, that their zeal to impart its light and comfort to their fellow-men seemed to correspond with its vastness

and glory. The natural consequence of this state of things was to arouse the clergy, who had been quietly settled in the doctrine of endless misery, and were enjoying a comfortable living with their people, who believed their doctrine, to look about them, and to exert all the means in their power to oppose and put down a doctrine, which, to them, appeared to be subversive of Divine truth, and dangerous to the interests of souls committed to their charge. The few defenders of Universalism found enough to do, in contending with their numerous and learned opposers, without retiring to their studies to call in question, and to examine, the soundness of certain tenets which they had never doubted, and which they could hold, not only without weakening their own cause, but use successfully in opposing their adversaries, who believed the same.

While viewing these circumstances, in room of wondering why our early preachers did not see the impropriety of allowing the infinite demerit of sin, and the incongruous notion of an infinite substitute for its penalty, we may marvel that they should have been brought so far out of

darkness as to behold that one bright and glorious star in the midst of the gloom which surrounded it. They were evidently men of strong minds, acute discernment, and of moral courage. To a wonderful degree were their labors blessed, and converts from the doctrine of endless punishment became numerous, as trophies of their spiritual warfare.

But as believers were multiplied, and additions made to the number of advocates of the impartial doctrine, it seems that Divine wisdom saw fit to lead some minds to look inquiringly into the soundness of many dogmas which had been suffered to lie undisturbed in public opinion for ages. These inquiries were directed to test the doctrine of the Trinity, of vicarious atonement, of the infinite demerit of sin, of the justice of endless punishment, of the common doctrine of a personal devil, and the existence of that hell in which the church had so long believed, and which her clergy had located in the invisible, eternal world. On examination of the dogma of three distinct persons in one indivisible, infinite being, each of which is infinite, it was discovered to be embar-

rassed not only with mystery, defying even an approach by the human understanding, but involving most palpable absurdity; and when the fact was duly considered, that Jesus by his many prayers acknowledged his dependence on his Father in heaven, and when it was also duly realized that he acknowledged that he was sent of the Father, and that all the power he possessed and exercised was given him by the Father, the dogma was given up, as resting on no better ground than human invention.

Vicarious atonement, when carefully examined, was believed to depend on certain assumed notions, which had for their support neither Scripture nor reason. If man justly deserved endless punishment, or any punishment at all, neither Scripture nor reason would allow that the innocent should suffer it in room and stead of the guilty. As to reason, it frowns on such a dogma indignantly; and the Scriptures, wherever they speak on the subject, assure us that God will render to every man according to his works. As, in the very nature of moral consciousness, guilt is the necessary retribution of the commis-

sion of known wrong, it is impossible that the innocent should suffer it.

The doctrine of the infinite demerit of sin, and of the justice of endless punishment, required no very deep or labored research to result in exploding it. The eye of enlightened reason, at one glance, could clearly see, that if sin be infinite, there can be no difference or degrees in criminality, while the Scriptures clearly teach a comparative distinction, and that while one offender is justly liable to many stripes, another is exposed to but a few. As to the justice of endless punishment, minds enjoying the liberty of free inquiry could easily detect the diabolical character of such justice, as it is the exact opposite of the Divine nature, which is love. Such justice is evidently predicated on the false principle and ungodly practice of rendering evil for evil.

The commonly received opinion, that there exists a personal being called the devil, seemed as difficult to eradicate from people's minds as any of the superstitions which had been nourished by learned divines in any age. Such a being, it seems, was indispensable in contriving

and carrying on the scheme of man's eternal ruin! But when inquiry demanded who was the author of this devil, and what he was made for, and who it is that upholds him, and other kindred questions were asked, the most plausible account which could be obtained amounted to the startling blasphemy of attributing the whole to the wisdom of God!

These inquiring minds indulged in the liberty of calling in question the existence of that hell, in the invisible, eternal world, the belief of which the doctors of the church have taught to their people for many ages. And now, what account were our divines able to furnish concerning this dark, gloomy state of endless woe? Nothing more than that they knew nothing about it. True, they would say that we read of hell in the Bible, but they were utterly unable to show that a single passage gave countenance to the existence of such a hell as they professed to believe in, and in which they taught the people to believe. And as such a belief is evidently dishonorable to the character of our heavenly Father it was rejected as an abominable superstition.

As some of those exploded superstitions had been retained by the early defenders of Universalism, it was alarming to them to be assured that their younger brethren, who preached the glorious doctrine of universal salvation, had repudiated those doctrines which they had never called in question. And now arose a conflict between the preachers of Universalism, almost as sharp as that which had been carried on between Universalists and their opposers; and had it not been that the spirit imparted to all who believed in that one central idea of universal, impartial, and unchangeable love, predominated in directing their feelings and measures, lamentable consequences might have been realized. But such as had been favored with new discoveries, realizing that they first believed in universal salvation, before they made those discoveries, and even by the assistance of their fathers in the faith, would have been quite unreasonable, had they been either uncharitable or ungrateful towards their elders and benefactors. Such considerations were not without their favorable influence.

The doctrine of a future retribution, or of a

state hereafter in which the sins of this life will be punished, was not denied by any of the early defenders of final restoration. The belief that there will be an end of sin and of its punishment was received with such transporting joy, that minor subjects were little thought of. Those in our times, who are led to yield an assent to the doctrine of Universalism, rarely feel such ecstatic joy as did the first believers. The reason is, those who now become convinced of the truth of the doctrine have so long lived in the atmosphere of the doctrine, that they have, by degrees, become fully convinced, having been inclined that way for years. As early as were repudiated those opinions which have been noticed, that of a future state of punishment was called in question, and in process of a few years was by many disbelieved. By the writer of these pages this doctrine has been doubted more than half a century, and for nearly forty years has been disbelieved, as being taught in the Scriptures. Difference of opinion on this question, though at one time, and for a little while, produced a rent among our clergy; the healing power of the main

doctrine soon overcame all difficulty, which, for a long time, has given us no trouble. Though there are some now who believe in what is called future retribution, we know of none who pretend to prove it by Divine revelation, or dwell on it in their preaching. We know of no passages of Scripture, which teach the doctrine of a future state, which imply the existence of either sin or punishment in that state. Could we find any such testimony, we should then need Scripture proof that such sin and punishment will have an end, in order to be consistent Universalists.

Owing to the age and infirmities of the writer of this article, he cannot expect to be able, much longer, to render any considerable service to the infinitely glorious cause to whose interest he has had the happy privilege of devoting his humble talents for nearly sixty years. But while holding himself ready to resign his armor, at the word of command, he cannot fully express his gratitude for what he sees of the wonderful spread of truth, and for the numerous army which he will leave in its future defence.

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN

WHO DESIGN TO ENTER THE MINISTRY.

It cannot appear unreasonable to any thinking, serious mind, that one who has spent nearly sixty years in the ministry of Christ, and his gospel, and whose lot has been to contend against those erroneous doctrines which for ages have held the minds of men in chains of darkness, and who, in conflict with the learned advocates of those doctrines, has been compelled to bear all that reproach which the enemies of Divine truth felt themselves justified in heaping on one who showed no disposition to cringe before them, or to shun exposing their errors, should, at that advanced age which evidently indicates that his labors are drawing to a close, feel a concern for, and be mindful of, those who may be called to the ministry of gospel truth hereafter. Not that he feels any concern for fear the cause of Divine truth will not

find faithful laborers in its defence; for he now has the joy of beholding many around him, devoted to the work, and whose labors are evidently blessed. But it is to be feared that some, who have engaged in this profession, have either mistaken their proper calling, or have but too imperfectly prepared themselves for the duties and labors which the calling demands.

A young man may be sincere, honest, a true believer, have a commendable zeal, and have a heart so warmed with the spirit of Christ, and of universal benevolence, that he may feel that it is his duty to enter the ministry at once, and devote himself to its public services; and yet, it may be, he has mistaken his proper calling. There are many things which might be wanting in such a case. A want of a suitable education would be a serious objection to his immediate entrance into the ministry. In our country, and in our times, there is no necessity which requires a young man to engage in a profession, destitute of an education suitable to the performance of its duties. But there are other considerations to which careful regard ought to be paid, before the youth should

decide to make the ministry his profession. Does he desire this calling, because it is honorable in the sight of the world? If so, he is advised not to engage in it. If the honors of the world allure to this choice, the ministration of Divine truth will never be benefited by his labors, and he himself will be likely to live and wonder why he is so little esteemed. The hour is coming, and now is, when the pure gospel, in its simplicity, shall be the desire and delight of the people, and those who are true to its principles, and faithful in its ministration, will be partakers of that honor which cometh from God only.

Any natural impediment in speaking, which cannot be overcome, is a sufficient objection. Let no one think of entering the ministry, with an expectation of living an easy, idle life; or of moving in fashionable circles, or of living luxuriously. The ministry of the gospel wants no idlers; it cannot endure them; it requires much study, much labor, and constant care, that no part of duty is neglected. If a young man has a strong dislike to study and reading, he had better choose some other calling. The Bible should be

much read and carefully studied; and there are many other books which should be read, to assist the minister of the word. Unless a strong desire to spend much time in fashionable circles can be overcome, and a disposition to be familiar with the poor acquired, there will be an indispensable qualification wanting.

The youth who would enter the ministry should ask himself such questions as the following: Do I understandingly believe in the existence of that God of whom the Scriptures speak? Do I sincerely believe in the inspiration of the prophecies concerning a Messiah? Do I also believe that Jesus, who was crucified, was the true Messiah, and that he did the works which the New Testament inform us he did? Do I believe that the crucified arose from the dead? Do I believe that the benefits of the Christian dispensation were designed by our Creator for the final benefit of all men, and that, in the fulness of times, by the Father appointed, all men will become partakers of such benefit? If, after due consideration, and after using all the necessary means to obtain satisfaction on these ques-

tions, they can be answered in the affirmative, so far as belief is concerned, there seems no objection to the choice he has made of his future calling. But there is this question relative to his choice, which he ought duly to consider: Do I undertake the duties and labors of this profession because I love to perform them, and fully believe I shall enjoy these duties better than those of any other calling? If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative, some business, some labor better liked, should be chosen. It cannot reasonably be supposed that a man will succeed well in a calling which he does not like. It should be the aim of parents and guardians, to find out what employment is best suited to the natural genius of those young men whom God has committed to their care, and to give them all necessary assistance in their power, to follow whatever honest calling best suits them. It is injudicious and unkind to persuade a young man, contrary to his inclination and choice, to engage in any profession or calling. If, for instance, a physician would prefer any other calling than his own, how reluctantly must he attend to all those intricate studies

which are necessary to his success, and to the saving of the lives of his patients! And how painful must it be to him, to be called on at all hours, by day and by night, to attend the sick! Destitute of a love of his calling, it is unreasonable to suppose the professed minister of the gospel will do that justice to his calling which the great variety of its duties requires, or enjoy, as every man should, the business in which he is engaged.

As love is the great and most powerful principle which moves man to action, so it is the only principle on which reliance can safely be placed, that all required duties will be faithfully performed. Unless, therefore, a man is sensible that he loves all the great truths of the gospel of Christ more than all the salary he may obtain for ministerial services, and more than all the honors which people may bestow on him, the ministry is unsafe in his hands. Directed and impelled by this love, small natural abilities, as well as the great, will be found profitable in their several spheres of duty. But as to *great* and *small*, in relation to man's abilities, we are liable

to come to wrong conclusions. All the vast variety of talents given to man are useful and indispensable, and, if properly directed and employed, are useful and estimable. Some preachers may possess what may be called popular talents, and draw, on occasions, large congregations; others may not, in this respect, be equally esteemed; but this difference by no means argues that the former class are the best ministers, or the most useful pastors.

In respect to particular tenets, not included in those great principles of doctrine in which all who believe in those essential truths which distinguish Universalists from other Christian denominations agree, it is reasonable that every one should enjoy his own views, and defend them in his own way, without forfeiting Christian fellowship. At the present time, many preachers seem to be led into speculations with regard to the particulars of man's future state; and, as might naturally be expected, a variety of opinions have been adopted. Some believe that all enter the future state in one and the same condition, as to moral purity; some think that it will require a

process of purgation, to bring what they call the wicked into a state of holiness; some think that there will be, in the future state, different grades as to intellectual and moral improvement, as there are in this mortal life; some are of opinion that those who are here acquainted with each other, such as husbands and wives, such as parents and children, such as brothers and sisters, such as are here friends or enemies, will know each other in the future world as they know them in this. And there are other speculative notions which are contended for, any or all of which may be assented to, without leading to a renunciation of the essential doctrine of Christianity, or of amounting to a just cause of a dissolution of Christian fellowship. As to giving advice to young men in regard to these speculations, it is deemed safe to say, that it must be unprofitable to spend much time or study to frame opinions nowhere intimated in the Scriptures, and the truth of which we have no means of ascertaining. It is well that we avoid any opinions which are used for evil ends. Should any one, by believing his great attainments, while in this

momentary state, are to place him far in advance of millions of others, in the future world, tend to fill his mind with pride and self-conceit, in place of doing him any good, it would deprive him of that meekness and humility which are essential to his present happiness, and cannot fail to lessen his usefulness. Or should any one urge the belief of such an opinion, as an inducement to others to improve in holiness and virtue, should he succeed, he would place that high station in the future world as the object to be gained, in place of holiness and virtue themselves! In order to see this subject in its true light, let it be simplified as follows: True holiness consists in love to God and in love to mankind. Now, if we profess to love thus for the reward of a high station above our fellow-men in the future state, it is evident that it is not love to God nor love to man, but the love of being exalted above other men in the future world, which is the object of our love. Such is the real character of all our pretended obedience, while the expectation of a future reward is our motive. It is reasonable, therefore, that young ministers of the Word of

Life should be cautious not to deceive themselves, or anybody else, on a subject of such vital importance.

It is to be feared that some, who profess Universalism, and are engaged in the ministry, are desirous of rendering their labors acceptable to our brethren of the Unitarian denomination, by adopting such like opinions, and holding them forth in public. By so doing, they seem to indicate that their sympathies are rather with the Unitarians than with those Universalists who preach no other sentiments to their congregations than such as the Scriptures teach.

On the subject which embraces the great field of ministerial study and preaching, some suggestions may be profitable. That great field is the Bible. While ministers profess to believe that the Scriptures contain a Divine revelation, and while they solemnly receive them as their guide in their profession, they ought not to neglect the study of them; they should be read with great care and critical attention. By so reading this most valuable of all books, the minister becomes acquainted with the history of the chosen people,

their laws and customs, and with much of the history of other nations who surrounded them. Also, by such reading, an acquaintance is obtained with the promises which God made to the patriarchs, and with all the prophecies concerning the Jews and other nations, and in particular with the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and his reign on the earth. The New Testament gives an account of the exact fulfilment of all the prophets spake concerning Christ; and gives us a true history of his teachings, his miracles, his precepts, his sufferings, his death, and resurrection. Here, too, we have an account of the travels and labors of the apostles of Jesus, and many epistles written by them, all full of matter from which may be drawn all possible subjects necessary to furnish the preacher with the bread of life, with which he may abundantly feed the people with knowledge and understanding.

The custom which now seems to prevail, of reading a text of Scripture as the subject of a sermon, and then delivering a discourse suitable for a lyceum lecture, having no special reference to the subject of the passage read, has a direct

tendency to set the Scriptures aside, and to so corrupt public taste as to render the inspired Word undesirable. Should this practice so prevail as to become general, it must have the effect of depriving society of the rich instruction derivable from that treasure which is designed to make us wise unto salvation.

We may be asked if no other books are to be read than the Bible? To this question the answer is, any book may be profitably studied, which can assist the preacher to understand the Scriptures, and to learn their true sense. There are many learned annotations, by many authors of different denominations, any of which may doubtless be of service to the young preacher, who, by their assistance, may make himself acquainted with the manners and customs, laws and governments, of different people of which the Scriptures speak. This knowledge is necessary, in order to understand the many figurative portions of Scripture; but let the student put little dependence on the correctness of the application of Scripture, in proof of any doctrine, found in annotations. It is not safe to use annotations

as authority to prove the truth of any doctrine. The best authority by which we may determine the true application of Scripture, is the Scriptures themselves. If we are in doubt as to the meaning of any particular passage, search the Scriptures to find what other passages say on the same subject; and by a careful comparison, the true meaning will appear. Nor would we restrict the young preacher to the Bible, and to annotations on the Bible; if he has not already made himself acquainted with ancient and modern history, and with the history of the church, he should improve all the time he can spare from other duties, to read approved historians. As to other lighter reading, the preacher should be cautious that time is not wasted on that which is of no profit. But we ought not to neglect to make ourselves acquainted with any solid improvement which may favor our own times.

Reformation and general improvement are now loudly called for, by the demands of the age, and it is rebellion against the evident requirements of Divine wisdom, to blindly oppose what the good of our race calls for. But wisdom, which

dwells with prudence, should be allowed to direct all our enterprises; and great caution is necessary, lest we injure a good cause. Jesus said: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up!" But he would not allow such premature labor as would waste and destroy the wheat with the tares. The first thing that we should make ourselves sure of, is that we know what manner of spirit we are of, and that the water we are about to use for the purpose of cleansing is not as filthy as is that we would cleanse. Our conservative brother should be treated kindly. There may be a mote in his eye, but the eye is a tender, sensitive member, and a rude, unskilful effort to remove the mote may destroy the sight. By these suggestions, is intended to show the necessity of being guided by a right spirit. This spirit is love, impartial love. One of the reformations which the age now calls for, is the abolition of slavery. Let us take this subject as a sample. Here, then, are the poor, unhappy, wronged slave, and his unfeeling master. Now, if we love the slave and hate the master, what do we more than others, who are no more

partial than ourselves? While we regard the rights of the slave, and pity him, should we feel no pity for the owner of the slave, who, perhaps, has had no agency in becoming the unblest possessor of such forbidden property? That slavery is a sin, in the eye of Christianity, and in the eye of humanity, all must allow; but where it exists it is a legalized sin, and it lies at the door of those who have made the laws. We may, by God's blessing, as ministers of an impartial gospel, do much in communicating that enlightening truth, which, when universally known, will give freedom to all men.

"Take heed to thyself," is an apostolic injunction. Every young minister is advised to have a careful eye on himself. We have no enemies who can inflict on us such deadly wrongs, as those we are in danger of receiving from our own imprudence. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

It seems evident, that God has called but few, if any, to labor in the ministry of universal salvation, who are rich in temporal means of a livelihood. Our preachers are, therefore, generally

dependent on the people to whom they minister, for their support, and the support of their families, if they have any. In connection with this fact, another should be considered. The largest part of community who adhere to our faith are the laboring class. From these considerations, it follows, that the minister should live in so prudent a manner as not to be too burdensome to his supporters, nor to involve himself in debts beyond his means of paying. Too often has it happened that, owing to embarrassments, preachers have left their places and societies, owing their best friends, who have labored hard and lived prudently, to save what the imprudent minister has spent and will never pay. To point out all the evils growing out of such facts would require a volume.

Meekness and humility are recommended to young preachers. Without such virtues, little peace or contentment can be enjoyed. The young are too apt to think and to feel that it is due to them to occupy as favorable stations as do those who have labored many years, and encountered hardships which those who now engage in

our ministry will, if they are prudent and faithful, never be called on to endure. "Let patience have its perfect work." The way to gain much is to be faithful in a little; and be assured, that in the little, there is, to say the least, as much real enjoyment, as in ever so much.

The ministry is a spiritual warfare. Therefore, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. — Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

If the foregoing advice and suggestions shall, by the blessing of God, in any degree promote the cause of truth and righteousness, and be of any service to those for whose good I earnestly pray, for it let God be glorified.

A SERMON,

Delivered in Bleeker Street Church, New York, at the Session of the General Convention of Universalists, Sept. 16, 1847.

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."—Rom. xii. 1, 2.

The word *therefore*, in the first member of the text, shows that the apostle had reference to what he had said before. And here it is well to suggest a caution which all should regard, not to suppose that the commencement of a chapter is always the beginning of a subject. It is often otherwise. It is often necessary to go back, and to use care that we find where a subject begins, and to follow the connection, and keep the theme of the writer in mind; otherwise we may read to no profit. When the apostle wrote his epistles, he did not divide them into chapters and verses,

but wrote as we write our letters, without such divisions. These divisions were made for the purpose of fixing a concordance to the Scriptures.

The subject on which our author labored in the preceding chapter, and to which he alludes in the first verse of our text, is that of the mercies of God. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," &c.

Let us now endeavor to obtain an understanding of the inspired writer's argument respecting the Divine mercy, as manifested in the all-wise economy of God.

This epistle was written to the Christian church at Rome, which was composed of both Jews and Gentiles; and an important object of the writer was to do away that prejudice which existed in the minds of the two people towards each other. We find, therefore, on reading this epistle, that the writer speaks sometimes to his brethren, the Jews; at other times, to Gentile Christians.

In the eleventh chapter, the writer addresses the Gentile Christians in regard to the Jews, who

had rejected Christ and his doctrine; had stumbled at the stumbling-stone which God laid in Zion, and were broken off through unbelief, and is careful to show them that all this had happened to Israel, according to the appointments of Divine wisdom, for the benefit of the Gentiles. See verse 11. "I say, then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy." Here the apostle is careful to guard the Gentile Christians against supposing that the blindness and unbelief of Israel were designed for their final exclusion from Divine favor. See what follows. "Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? For I speak to you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office; if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"

As wrong views of the Divine favor are generally attended with pernicious effects on the human heart, causing it to be puffed up with pride, the apostle is careful to put his Christian brethren on their guard. See verse 25 and on. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceit,) that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Having brought this immensely im-

portant and glorious subject to a close, and feeling his soul elated with views of Divine mercy so vast and wonderful, he exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory forever, amen." The next words are those of our text: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

Let it be kept in mind that the apostle presents the mercies of God, which effectually embrace the fulness of both Jews and Gentiles, as the foundation of all the Christian duty which he enjoins on believers in Jesus. By this we see that the

mercy of God is not obtained by our obedience; but our obedience is the natural fruit of the Divine mercy. And this is clearly expressed by the apostle to the Ephesians, thus: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. . . . For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We will not proceed to enforce the duties enjoined in our text, until an important query, which is now undoubtedly agitating many minds in this assembly be duly solved. The question is, Of what benefit was the unbelief of the Jews to the Gentiles? Or how was it that the Gentiles obtained mercy through the unbelief of the Jews? In order the more easily to throw the light of this subject into the mind of the hearer, we will suppose that the Jews, as a people, with their rulers, and the whole estate of their elders, had received

Jesus as their expected Messiah; had all repented of their sins, and believed the doctrine he taught; what would they have done more? Or how would they have treated the Son of God? They would have pressed him to their bosoms; they would have carried him in state and splendor from synagogue to synagogue; they would have called on all the people of the land to hear the Divine Teacher; and a glorious reformation would have been effected in the land. How your hearts now swell with delight at such a scene! And how deeply do you regret that no such things took place! But suppose these things had happened, would the prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled? Would what Isaiah says, in his 53d chapter, all have taken place? Would Jesus have been despised and rejected of men, — a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? Would he have been wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities? Would the chastisement of our peace have been upon him? And should we have been healed with his stripes? Would he have been oppressed and afflicted? Would he have been brought as a lamb to the

slaughter? It is seen at once, that, had not the Jews, as a people, been blinded as to the true character of Jesus, they would not have persecuted and put him to death, as was foretold by the prophets. How, then, could the gospel have been established in the world, founded on the fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus, according to the testimony of the prophets? If those prophecies had not been fulfilled, and the disciples of Jesus had attempted to preach him among the Gentiles as the Messiah promised to the house of Israel, the Gentiles could have refuted them out of the prophets. But with what irresistible force of argument did the disciples proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, founded on the entire fulfilment of all which the prophets have said! The discourse which Paul delivered in the synagogue of the Jews at Antioch, in Pisidia, had a much more favorable effect on the Gentiles than on the Jews. In that discourse, the apostle holds the following language: "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and

their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." Such a powerful appeal carried conviction to the minds of the Gentiles, who desired to hear the apostle the next Sabbath. Our subject is now clear; and we see that the blindness and unbelief of the Jews were the means of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, which explains the sense and propriety of the Saviour's address to his Father, where he said, "I thank thee, O Father. Lord of heaven and earth, because

thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." Well did Jesus know the consequence to himself of the blindness of the Jews, and yet he thanked his Father for it!

I have often thought with wonder, that our Christian doctors should think and speak so much in commendation of the sufferings of Jesus, and prize those sufferings so highly as they do, and yet are confident that those who inflicted those sufferings were therefore justly rejected from that mercy of God, which they believe they enjoy, which comes to them through those sufferings! However, we have seen that God concluded both Jew and Gentile, all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

If it be objected to the arguments to which we have attended, that we make out that the wicked conduct of the Jews was so overruled by the divine wisdom and mercy of God, that it resulted in their benefit, so far from denying the justice of the inference, we contend for the principle it embraces, and for its righteousness. No one,

acquainted with the Scriptures, will deny that God overruled the wicked conduct of Joseph's brethren for their good. Now this a righteous God would not have done, if it had not been right; and if it was right to do so in one case, it is right in all cases. This theory will justify itself in a practical trial. My friend, you have an enemy who wishes to do you harm, and wrongs you in various instances. Now what is your duty in this case? In the first place, it is your duty to love your enemy. You have a right, if you can, so to manage as not only to render your enemy's wrongs to you harmless, but beneficial. And it is right, also, to go still further, and so manage as to render your enemy's wrongs beneficial to himself. This is overcoming evil with good; and this principle is the very foundation and essence of the gospel, and of all true religion. This is the pure wisdom of God, and all which comes short of it, or opposes it, has no higher origin than the wisdom of this world, which cometh to nought.

Let us now proceed to enforce the duty enjoined in our text, on the broad foundation of the mercies

of God, and the reasonableness of offering our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. In support of the reasonableness of this service, two arguments may suffice. Let us, for a moment, contemplate ourselves, — our physical organization. How "fearfully and wonderfully we are made!" God is the author of every part and faculty belonging to our bodies. We had no hand in this work. We possess not a single member of our frames because we asked for it, or desired it. All our senses are the free gifts of our Creator; and are all organs of pleasure and enjoyment. Consider, for example, the eye. The gift, how precious! All the wealth of the world could not tempt us to part with it. Its utility should be appreciated with gratitude to its author. Who can estimate the value of that faculty by which we behold the beauties of nature, and see the faces of those we love? Consider the ear. It would require a volume to describe its worth, its utility, and the enjoyments it affords. May I speak of the tongue and the faculty of speech? Can we think a moment of this blessed gift without adoring the author of it? How

weighty is the admonition never to use this faculty to dishonor the giver! Were all to regard this subject as they ought, our ears would never be offended with words of profanity, nor would the tongue ever be employed to defame, or injuriously to deceive. If we duly realize that God is our Creator, and that we owe ourselves wholly to him, the reasonableness of the apostle's injunction is apparent. But this reasonableness appears evident from the fact, that all the requirements of our heavenly Father, all the duties he has enjoined on us, are designed for our good and for our benefit alone. For himself, he needs not our service. He is infinitely independent. Does he command us to love him with all our heart? It is because that in so doing we love everything that is capable of affording us enjoyment. Does he command us to love one another as we love ourselves? It is because we cannot enjoy ourselves, nor our fellow-creatures, without this love. Just as deeply as we are interested in our own happiness, we are interested in keeping the commandments of God. In this correct view of the Divine requirements, we plainly discover the

reasonableness of the service enjoined in our text. And here, too, we have a clear understanding of the doctrine of Divine government in regard to rewards and punishments. Any compliance with moral duty brings a corresponding recompense of enjoyment; any departure from moral duty is a corresponding discount on our happiness. This perfect law of our moral nature is so duly administered, that no evasion can possibly be effected. For obedience, will any one ask for something better? Will he say that something more is due? Will he inform us what that something more and better is? Is there anything in the universe better than love to God and love to mankind? The psalmist gives us a correct statement of our subject in the 19th Psalm. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much

fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." By this member of our text, we are reminded of the apostle's fears that the customs of the people of the age in which he lived would exert an influence to draw the minds and hearts of his Christian brethren into conformity with them. And who can wonder at his apprehensions? The Jewish rites and ceremonies, their habits and prejudices, on the one hand, and those of the Gentiles, on the other, were so imposing, so very popular with the great body of the people, that it required little less than a perpetual miracle to preserve pure Christianity from a total contamination of their corrupt principles and practices. How natural was it for Jewish Christians to desire to make their religion acceptable to the Jews, and thereby avoid the contumely heaped upon them by those with whom they were so nearly connected! Surely, the danger was not

small. Nor was this danger less with Gentile Christians. The idolatry in which they had been educated, and to which their fathers and mothers, their brothers and sisters, had been devoted, and still were devoted, was of an imposing character. It was expensive and splendid, and well adapted to gratify human pride and human passions. Who can wonder at the apostle's fear, as expressed to his brethren at Corinth? "For I am jealous over you, with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." In the Jewish rituals and traditions, and in the superstitious devotions and abominable rites of the Gentiles, there was nothing wanting to cherish the pride, the vanity, and illicit desires of a blind multitude. All that wealth and learning could do to impose on the common people, and keep them in ignorance and awe, was exerted with a vigilance peculiar to a hierarchy. In the high places filled by those priests, was lodged

that spiritual wickedness of which the apostle speaks in his epistles to the Ephesians. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

With all the pomp, with all the glory, with all the wealth, and all the learning of the schools among both Jews and Gentiles, let us, for a moment, compare the simplicity that was in Christ. Born in a family which was supported by mechanical labor; brought up in laborious habits; destitute of wealth and the honors of the schools, he commenced his public labors. To assist him in the ministry of his doctrine, a few fishermen, and others of useful occupations, were chosen. The doctrine which Jesus taught was as simple and easy to understand as the common affairs of life. His sermon on the mount, containing the sublimest beatitudes and all the duties of life, requires but ordinary talents to understand. His manner of teaching by the use of parables communicated truth in

the most simple manner. When he justified his favor to publicans and sinners, of which he was accused by the Pharisees and Scribes, how simple was his method! "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? and when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulder, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." And how sublimely simple, if I may so say, was his application of his parable! "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." On foot, see him travel from city to city. Fatigued and weary of his journey, see him resting himself by Jacob's well at Sichar; and mark the simplicity of his conversation with the woman of Samaria. To set his disciples an example of humility, behold him who gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, healing to the sick, sound-

ness to the maimed, and life to the dead, gird himself with a towel and wash their feet.

How poorly has the simplicity which is in Christ been maintained by the Christian church! Read its history, in which we learn its conformity to such worldly institutions and customs as are pleasing to human ambition, and all the vain pride and corruption which characterized pagan idolatry. That subtilty with which the serpent beguiled Eve is constantly at work, persuading us to seek to render religion popular in the eyes of the world. That spiritual wickedness may be maintained in high places, high places must be established and supported. So deeply is the love of popular esteem rooted in the heart, that, it is to be feared, many are inclined to concede to opinions and customs inconsistent with their better judgment, for the sake of that shining phantom.

The renewal of mind of which our text speaks, which raises the soul above the deceitful charms of that honor which men receive one of another, and directs its desires towards the honor which cometh from God only, will enable the disciple

of Jesus to renounce everything contrary to "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," and to make proof of that will by gaining a correct knowledge of it, and by a practical conformity of heart and life to its divine principles.

Of all subjects embraced in the science of theology, no one can take precedency of the Divine will. This will must embrace the ultimate result of the Divine economy, as revealed in the gospel of man's salvation. This will is specifically set forth in the apostle's argument, which we have noticed while treating on the mercies of God. Had we time, it would be a most edifying labor to trace the Scripture declarations concerning this subject, commencing with the promises of God to the fathers, and following their corroborations through all the declarations of the prophets. But we must only add to what has already been said, several passages in the epistles of St. Paul. To the Ephesians he says: "Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself;

that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." In this form of expressing the *will* of God, we discover the three characteristics of the Divine will which are named in our text: *good*, *acceptable*, and *perfect*. The apostle says that this will is according to God's *good* pleasure. Good, indeed! What better will could even God himself have revealed? All Jews and all Gentiles gathered together in one, even in Christ? Surely, this is superlatively good. That this will, when put in execution, will be entirely acceptable to the millions who shall be thus gathered together in one, even in Christ, there is no room to doubt. There will be no murmuring, no complaining, no envying one another, nor contention about different merits and unequal attainments; all will be one in Christ. The perfection of a will consists in its validity. If it be drawn according to law, and

is just and right in all its parts, so that it cannot be broken or set aside, it is perfect. Now the apostle, after stating what God's will is, informs us that he "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

To Timothy the apostle makes a declaration of the will of God, in such a guarded manner as to make it perfectly clear and easy of understanding. "I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." To evade the plain sense of this passage has been attempted by theological lawyers and critics, often in vain. There it stands in the Divine word, and there it must stand until every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall

confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Let us conclude with our text. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

A SERMON,

Preached before the Massachusetts Convention of Universalists, at its session in Salem, June 6, 1849.

[REPORTED BY REV. THOMAS WHITTEMORE.]

"And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things."—Isaiah xxv. 6.

I SHALL not, my brethren, make an apology for appearing before you. It occurred to me that I ought to do so; but then the thought immediately suggested itself, that my apology, perhaps, would itself require an apology; and, therefore, I shall leave each individual of the congregation to frame such an apology for me as he may think proper. I shall proceed immediately to consider the important doctrine of the text. And,

1st. What is meant by "this mountain?" This is the question for consideration. If we look into the second chapter of Isaiah, we shall find that he speaks of this mountain in the following terms: "And it shall come to pass in the

last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." (Verse 2.) Now you will please to observe the agreement between our text and the passage just recited. The text says, that in this mountain the Lord of hosts shall make a feast for *all people;* and in the passage before us, we are told that *all nations* shall flow unto it. Now, my friendly hearers, I wish you to fix your minds on the words *all people.* It would have been just as easy, that is, if God had directed it, for the prophet to have said *some people* as to have said *all* people. He might have said, "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto *some* people a feast of fat things." He might have said, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and *some* nations shall flow unto it." But the prophet says, all, — all people, all nations. Does not this text, my hearers, furnish a pretty good pretext for preaching a sermon on the gospel of Universalism? In the next place, I shall call the attention of my hearers to the

description of this mountain, which is found in Heb. xii. 18–24: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." This mountain that might not be touched was Sinai, from which the law was given under circumstances of solemn grandeur. The people

were afraid. But the Christian Hebrews had not come to that mountain, but they had come to Mount Zion. And what was Mount Zion? It was the city of the living God; it was the heavenly Jerusalem; where the Hebrew Christians mingled with the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. They had entered into the society of God's faithful servants. The Revelator said: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." (xxi. 10.) Now hear his description of the New Jerusalem. "And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any

more pain; for the former things are passed away." (2–4.) Now, my hearers, this mountain, in all the cases in which it is mentioned, is the same as mentioned by Daniel the prophet. He saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which, we are told, became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. Now, this was explained to the prophet to be the kingdom set up by the God of heaven, which shall never be destroyed; "and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Dan. ii. 44. This mountain, then, we see, signifies the kingdom of Christ, the gospel covenant. There are many honest divines who are misled in regard to this New Jerusalem; they think it is something that appertains not to this world; it cannot be found here; they think it is in the future state. But, my hearers, you should not forget that it came down from heaven to earth, — yes, *came down from heaven*, and John saw it descend, in his vision. God was in that New Jerusalem when it descended, and came down with it, in order that he might dwell with

men *on the earth.* And hark! Hear those who walk in the light of it, singing the praise of the Redeemer, and saying, "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall *reign on the earth.*" Rev. v. 9, 10. This mountain, then, this New Jerusalem, has respect to something in this earth; it is the kingdom which Christ set up in this world.

But here it may be asked, does not the speaker believe in the future immortal state? Yes, my friends, I do believe, and I rejoice in the belief, in life and immortality beyond the grave. And I believe that this life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel. *Brought to light*, observe, not created through the gospel. We all believe this — it is one of the principal glories of our faith.

Now, we will proceed to another subject. I wish to ask you this very important question: Is there anything unreasonable in supposing, if God were going to make a feast at all, that he

would make it for *all people?* Think of this. After all the preaching you have heard, after all the defences of orthodoxy, is there anything unreasonable in supposing, if God our heavenly Father were going to make a feast, that he would make it for all people? Now, let us vary the question a little. If God, our universal Father, were going to make a feast for mankind, is it not very *unreasonable* to suppose that he would make it only for a part? Is there a parent — one who is worthy to bear that precious name — who, if he were going to make a feast for his children, would not, if possible, make a feast for all of them? If he had twelve children, would he make a feast for four, and reject the eight? What would you think of him? Thank God, there is no such man! But suppose a man should do so, what would you think of him? And then suppose he should tell you that he was seeking the good of his whole family, — that he was seriously and earnestly seeking the greatest good of the whole family, — and should try to make it so appear to you, — should use glosses, and subterfuges, and prevarications, in order to

make you believe that he was really seeking the greatest good of the greatest number, what would you say to him ?

Now, look at the effect of this conduct, and these instructions, on the minds of the children. You go to the four who are selected to enjoy the feast, and you say to them, "Are not your brothers and sisters coming to the table ?" They answer you, "No." "Well," you inquire, "are you not glad ?" They say, "No, — we want them to come; our spirit yearns to have them come. We have prayed earnestly to our father to permit them to come; but, in his inscrutable wisdom, he judges that it is not wise that it shall be so." "But," you ask, "how does this appear to you ? Does it not give you great pain ?" They reply, "Yes, with our present wisdom and our present sympathies, it seems very dark, and gives us great pain; but our father teaches us that we shall be more enlightened by and by, and that our feelings will be changed; we shall become more reconciled to his will, and then we shall be satisfied." Such is the pretence. Now, do you not see, my hearers, that this amounts to

just nothing; that it is no justification of the father's conduct? But it amounts to just as much as all the arguments that are used to defend partialism.

But now we will look at this matter in another point of view. Suppose the parent is actually unable to provide a full feast for all his children. This cannot, indeed, be true of the Almighty. But we will suppose that the parent were actually unable to provide a feast for all. What would he do then? Would he not, if he were wise and impartial, divide the little among the whole? and let it go as far as it would to satisfy the wants of all? But is God deficient in means, my hearers? O no; we all know he is not. Then if he does not provide for all, it must be because he has not *the will* to do so. Yes, that is the true reason,— the want of a will. Hark! there comes across the mighty deep a cry from Ireland — many are suffering and dying for the want of food. We sit down to our tables to eat, and we think of the famishing thousands in Ireland. How were the vessels loaded with provisions, to feed the hungry! Well, we will suppose the vessels have

arrived there; and now we will ask, what shall be done with this food? It is evident there is not half enough to supply the whole. But it is ascertained that by a certain modification it will supply the wants of *all*. Now, what shall we do? Shall we make that modification, and thus supply the wants of all? or shall we refuse to do it, and then invent the best apology for not doing it? "O," you say, "feed all, feed all." Let it do all the good it can, just as this sun does which is shining down upon us to-day. He does all the good he can. He shines freely on all. He is not afraid that he shall happen to shine on some poor miserable sinner. No, he shines on all; for God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

As there is no lack of means in God, — as it is no more expensive to him to make a feast for all than for some, — that is enough; it seems to settle the question.

But we hear much said, by divines, about the provisions which God has made; we are told God has made the most liberal provisions for all.

In saying this, the clergy think they are liberal, very liberal. But then you will remember, that they have a plan in reserve, a contrivance in secret, that all shall not partake of the provisions. This is a part of the creed; it ends just as it would if the feast had been made only for a part. It is the same in the end, — it is PARTIALITY. If I was seeking to get your property away from you unjustly, it would not make much difference by what rule of arithmetic I did it. It might be done by one rule, or another; but if the quotient came out so that I should get your property, it would be precisely the same thing in the end, — would it not? It would make no difference by what rule of arithmetic I came to it.

Having given attention to these important matters, I now wish to call your attention to the fact that God represents his truth by provisions, by something to eat and drink. The metaphor is constantly occurring in the Scriptures. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah lv. 1. So

you heard in the discourse to which you listened yesterday the divine command, "Feed my lambs." The prophet says, "With joy shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation." On the great day of the Jewish feast, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." "The bread of God is he that came down from heaven to give life to the world." Now, my brethren, what is this bread? — this wine? — this water? — this milk? They represent the gospel; the gospel is represented by something nutritious, by something to eat and to drink. Remember this; it will drive away a dark cloud of error from your mind. It will dispel the delusion, that there is to be, somewhere, or sometime, in eternity, a reward for us for doing our duty here. It is a pernicious error. Let us reason together. If it should happen there is no such reward, what would you do with your duty? Some say, if there is no reward in eternity, they would not do their duty. But what a spirit is this! They would not do *their duty*, if it were not for the hope of an extraneous reward! Here, let me inquire, what is the com-

fort of the gospel? What is the essence of the bread, the water, the wine, the milk? Well, my hearers, it is nothing more or less than this, — it is *obedience*, — nothing else. It is obedience alone. Is that all? Rather a dry morsel, some might say. But dry as it is, you can't have anything else. If you do not have true obedience, there can be no reward; and if you have true obedience, it will of itself be the richest reward you can possess. It is life, and health, and plenty, and peace.

This will appear the more evident, if we consider what our duty consists in. What is our duty? O look at the first and great commandment of all. We are now coming to the provisions we have been speaking of. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." *All* the law and the prophets. Mark the language. This is the whole feast —

the only provision which God has made for the life of the soul. This is life, and the lack of it is death.

And yet some ask, what are we to have for loving God? We will not love God without a reward. If there be no reward in eternity, for loving God here on earth, we will not love him; we will revel in sin; for the great reason why we ought to do good is to escape eternal damnation. Is there no reward hereafter for loving God? Then we will not love him. This is the way the objector sometimes talks. But now, let us see this hypocrite before God. He asks his God to reward him for loving him; and he states that he would not have loved God if it had not been for the expectation of the eternal reward. Now, my hearers, do you not see, after all, that it is not God that this hypocrite loved? Do you not see that it is the reward which he loved, and which he sought? and that in reality he did not love God at all? See the child before his father. Does the child expect any reward for loving his father? No. What if the child should inquire, "Father, what will you give me, if I will love

you?" Would you not see that the child did not love his parent at all, but that it was the reward which it sought after?

My hearers, did you ever see anything you really loved, when you expected or desired any reward for loving it, except to possess the thing itself? You never ask for anything else; and it is well you do not, for there is no other true reward that you can have. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." What reward do you wish for this, except the obedience? Look at a community in which each member actually loved his neighbor as he loved himself. O happy, heavenly people! Now what reward shall they have therefor? Nothing but the good itself. It is obedience to the divine command which is their happiness; it is obedience which is their reward.

As I speak without writing, and have not notes before me, I am liable to extend my discourse to too great a length. But there are a few points remaining to be spoken of. We have spoken of the metaphor of eating and drinking; and, my friendly hearers, I desire to ask you what reward

you ever expect to have for eating and drinking? Hear what David says in the 19th Psalm: "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." (Verse 8–10.) This shows you how men are to be rewarded for obeying God's commands. There is no extraneous reward. The commandments of God are *sweeter than the honeycomb*. What reward do you expect for eating the honey, dripping from the comb? — What can you have that is sweeter than the thing itself? And observe again, the Psalmist says, "*In keeping*, [mark the words] *in keeping* of them is great reward." The reward is in the deed. The reward is the obedience itself.

But the objector will now ask, "Ah! what if man will not eat? What will be done then? If they do not all eat, what will you say?" I'll tell you. If they do not all eat, they won't enjoy

the benefits flowing therefrom. But will not the gospel feast attract them? I quoted you a text from the prophet on this wise, — "and all nations shall flow unto it." There is a powerful attraction in the gospel. The people are drawn to it. A thirsty man is drawn to pure waters that he may drink; so shall the nations flow to the gospel. The objector has not so much confidence in men as he has in the brutes. If you have a living spring in your pasture lands, you have no fear that your beasts will die of thirst. You do not appoint some person to watch them, and drive them to the waters, lest they fail to go. You do not think it needful to whip them in order to make them go and drink. Is it needful, then, to drive men to the gospel fountain? No; for "all nations shall flow unto it."

And now, let me ask, where is this feast? — where is this fountain? You need not go far to find it, my friendly hearers. It is not afar off. You need not ascend unto heaven, to bring it down from above; you need not descend into the deep, to bring it up from beneath; for the word is nigh thee, even in thy heart and in thy mouth;

that is, the word of faith which we preach. Yes, my hearers, it is in your heart already, if you will but obey it. There is something in our nature which is drawn by it. Jesus took the child, and set it in the midst of his disciples, and bade them be like it. There is something in the human soul that pants after God. It longs for the truth, as for living water. And what did the Redeemer say, — "It shall be within you a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

But I will draw to a close. I say, then, that in due time, in God's way, all will be brought to love him and to serve him, and consequently all will be happy. This is heaven — this always will be heaven. We do not believe in any other heaven besides this.

Having shown you what the mountain is, and where is its location, and what are the provisions, and what is the extent of them, I submit the subject, hoping none of you will ever expect a better heaven than you will find in keeping the commandments of God.

THE DOCTRINE OF

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

SHOWN TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DIVINE COMMANDS, AND EXPRESSED BY THEM.

No opinion, unfriendly to Universalism, has been more generally entertained, or exerted a more unfavorable influence to the prejudice of the spread of the doctrine, than the belief that its natural tendency is unfavorable to the interest of true piety and obedience to the commandments of God. Among the causes of the existence of this opinion, we may here notice two.

1st. Those who entertained the opinion were entirely ignorant of the nature of the salvation embraced in the doctrine. All the salvation they had in their minds, was to be saved from going to the hell, in the future state, in which they had been taught to believe. 2d. They appear to have been equally in the dark respecting the nature of

that influence by which men are enabled to obey the divine commands. The fear of hell torments was relied on to lead sinners to repentance, and to the use of those means whereby they might escape what they were taught so much to dread. Under these circumstances, the mere report of a doctrine which disallows the endless torments for any of the human family, in which the people believed, filled them with surprise, as it removed the very influence on which dependence was placed to carry on the work of salvation. The opinion, which has been here noticed, does not now prevail in community as it formerly did; nor is it now so much in use against Universalism as it was a few years since; and it is here introduced merely for the introduction of what shall follow, and to show, in times to come, what ignorance divine truth has had to contend with.

If success should attend our effort to show that the doctrine of universal salvation is included in the divine commands, and expressed by them, it will enable the reader to make a comparison between the opinion above noted, and the real truth and nature of the doctrine to which that

opinion was opposed, greatly to the advantage of the doctrine.

In executing this endeavor, we will begin with what Jesus called the first and great commandment, recorded Deut. vi. 4, 5: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Compare this with Matt. xxii. 37–40: "Jesus saith unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." With this second commandment, as by Jesus expressed, compare Lev. xix. 18: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord." Let us now carefully examine this first and great command, to ascertain whether it includes universal salvation. Two questions must here be answered. 1st. Is this first and great command

binding on all men? And, 2d. Does loving God with all the heart, &c., constitute the salvation of which the Scriptures speak? It is deemed useless to argue to prove that the command is universally binding, as no one can doubt it. But will all allow that loving God with all the heart includes our salvation? If this be allowed, our undertaking is accomplished, as the reader must clearly see. If the divine command is salvation, and if it is universally binding, then is universal salvation included in the command, and expressed by it. Those who are in the habit of believing that God requires us to love him as a condition on which he will release us from the awful doom of endless woe, may not, at first thought, understand our subject as we could wish. With such we must reason. It seems to them that if they are not to be released from the doom which they dread, and rewarded with everlasting bliss hereafter, for loving God and keeping his commands in this world, they have no inducement to do these things. But if they will be candid with themselves and with their God, they must see that they have deceived themselves. Suppose

their bargain should succeed, and they should really suppose that their love of God was genuine, and God should ask them why they loved him, and they should honestly answer, — We loved you for our release from hell, and for the endless bliss of heaven. Could all this take place, and these deceived hypocrites not see nor understand that it was not God that they loved, but the reward for which they pretended to do it? If this query does not effectually open their eyes, we will propose another. If loving God with all the heart, and loving our fellow-creatures as we love ourselves, do not constitute that bliss which salvation implies, in what does this bliss consist? This question must be answered, or the bliss of obeying the commandments of God be allowed to constitute salvation. The fact is, the doctors of the church have committed the egregious and pernicious error of supposing that what really constitutes salvation is only the condition on which it is bestowed. Thus, obedience to all the divine requirements, which constitutes what the Scriptures mean by righteousness, is not salvation, but creature labor, which is to be rewarded in the

future world by being admitted into what is called heaven, in room of being doomed to hell. Suppose this were the case, may we not ask the question, whether the blessed in heaven are released from obeying the commandments of God, or whether they will earn as much by obedience in the eternal world as they did in this? In this world they would have had no inducement to obedience had there been no hell hereafter to shun, and no heaven to obtain thereby. What inducement can they have in heaven to continue in obedience?

Hoping that the foregoing reasoning is sufficient to show that obedience to the divine commands constitutes what the Scriptures mean by salvation, let us proceed to notice the language of Scripture in agreement with the subject. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Repentance has been erroneously held as a condition of salvation, while, in fact, it is salvation itself; for by repentance we are saved from sin, which is all the salvation we need. "But I say unto you, love your

enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets." Obedience to these divine precepts is the righteousness which God requires of all mankind, and constitutes that salvation of which the apostle thus speaks: — "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Such declarations show most

plainly the nature of salvation, and that it consists in obedience to the divine commands.

The commandments of our heavenly Father are represented by that which is good for food, and desirable to the taste. See in the nineteenth Psalm: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them is great reward." If the law of the Lord, and its commandments, statutes, and judgments, do all for us which is set forth in the above passage, most surely it requires and accomplishes all the salvation which mankind need. All the duties required by this law of our heavenly Father are here represented to be sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb. Hear the language

of the prophet: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Hear also the words of the divine Master: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried: If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

As it has been made sufficiently clear, that obedience to the divine commands constitutes what the Scriptures mean by salvation, and that the joys of salvation are in the keeping of the divine commands, there is a manifest absurdity in supposing that any extraneous reward is to be expected for obedience. The absurdity is the same as would appear if a thirsty person should demand a compensation for drinking what is desirable to his taste, and which quenches his

thirst; or as if an hungry man should refuse to eat food which he needs for nourishment, and which is perfectly suited to his appetite, unless he is sure of some compensation for the duty of eating!

Will it be said, that all which has been argued may be allowed, without establishing the doctrine of universal salvation, because it is not certain that all men will ever be brought to obey the divine commands? To this we reply: — "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes," &c. Can all this be done, and the subject of this law not saved from sin? It does not appear to be possible. If this law is equally binding on all men, we have good reason to believe that what it works for any it will in God's due time effect for all.

There is one momentous truth clearly established by the first and great command, on which we rely for the accomplishment of universal

obedience. It is granted that our heavenly Father does, in righteousness, command all men to love him with all the heart, which we have shown to comprehend universal salvation. Let us then ask the plain, simple question: — Does our heavenly Father love his offspring as entirely, as perfectly, as he requires them to love him? — If he does, if he ever brings any to love him, he will bring all thus to love him. That God loves all whom he commands to love him, and loves them as perfectly as he requires them to love him, is even self-evident. If God did not love his offspring, it would be as unreasonable as it would be arbitrary for him to command them to love him. An apostle says, "We love him, because he first loved us." Again, — "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love."

It is that love of God to mankind, which was commended unto us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, on which we depend for the accomplishment of the reconciliation of all things unto himself.

Without special regard to the question about man's free will, and God's decrees, we may take

it for granted, that what the Scriptures plainly assert may be safely believed. We therefore feel confident that the divine agency extends to the overruling of the hearts of men, as we are informed by the prophet Jeremiah. See chapter xxxi. 33, 34: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more."

The assurance which the foregoing considerations are calculated to afford gives no small consolation and comfort, while encountering the sorrows and afflictions which are occasioned by sin and unbelief. Hope looks for the fulfilment of the divine requirements in all on whom they are binding. Then will the whole family of man be filled with love to God and each other; and

all hatred, and strife, forever done away. Every wanderer from the fold of the Great Shepherd shall return; and when the last shall be brought in, there will be joy in heaven, unspeakable and full of glory.

REMARKS OFFERED

AT A RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE, WHERE MANY MINISTERS WERE PRESENT

It has been often asserted, and no doubt by many believed, that faith in Universalism would do to live by, but not to die by. Without attempting to analyze this trite objection to the blessed faith we profess to believe, we shall offer some suggestions in favor of the opinion, that a belief or a view of a desired fact, by inspiring the heart with unwonted joy, enables one not only to meet death without fear, but even to bid it welcome.

These suggestions will be founded on facts which are substantiated by undisputed authority. The first event to which your attention is invited is the meeting of the patriarch Jacob with his

dearly beloved but long lost Joseph. About twenty-three years had passed, after the bloody coat of his son caused him to believe that Joseph had been torn in pieces by some wild beast, and by that beast devoured, when his other sons brought him the unexpected intelligence that he was not only alive, but was lord of all Egypt! Such was the improbability of this report, in Jacob's mind, his heart fainted, for he believed them not. But when he raised his eyes, and looked out, and saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him to Egypt, he believed, and his spirit revived. And he said, It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." Now contemplate the aged patriarch, with his sons and their families, on their journey to Goshen in Egypt, where Joseph, in his chariot, meets them, and presents himself to his father. The scene is tender and affecting beyond description. Thus reads the account: "And Joseph made ready his chariot; and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen; and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

And Israel said unto Joseph, now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." Here we are taught that the realization of a truth strongly desired produces an ecstasy of joy which enables one to bid to death a hearty welcome.

Another very interesting circumstance is that recorded in Luke, concerning aged Simeon, which reads thus: "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Here was faith in salvation embracing all people, both Jews and Gentiles. The blessed babe was in his arms, and he could pray to depart. Was it a limited salvation which triumphed over death in this instance? It was that faith, my friends, which our opposers say will do to live by, but not to die by.

The dying scene of the renowned general who fell at the conquest of Quebec, in 1759, is illustrative of our subject. When Wolfe, the brave commander, was mortally wounded, and carried from the field, at the decisive moment which assured victory to his troops, roused from fainting, in the last agonies, by the sound of "They fly! they fly!" he eagerly asked, "Who flies?" And being told, the French, and that they were defeated, he said, "Then, I thank God, I die contented!" and expired. Thus, the joy inspired by that glory only which encircles the plume of victory in war tranquillizes the dying hero. In view of those instances which have been noticed, who can doubt that a belief in that immortality and eternal life brought to light through the gospel, and expressed by the inspired apostle,

who assures us, that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," can, even in death, awaken a joy far transcending such as arises from finite considerations ?

For myself, after nearly sixty years of contest with the enemies of the doctrine we profess, I can truly say, that all trials and burdens have been rendered comparatively light, by the constant cheering tidings, they fly ! they fly ! In myself, feeble and weak as a child, I saw in truth itself the strong arm of conquest and certain victory. And now, old and weak in body, I lean on that paternal arm which has been my defence and support. And when I see around me, as it were, a host of fellow-soldiers, in the vigor of manhood and youth, all devoted to the defence of the gospel, and hear the good tidings from various parts of the onward march of truth, I can hardly believe, that the heart and spirit of old Jacob was more revived by the sight of the wagons which were to carry him to his beloved Joseph, than mine are by surveying what is spread out before me.

Should it please God to grant me my reason

at that day and hour when I shall be called away from earthly scenes, and from duties here, may I hear from you, my brethren, — may I say my children, — the cheering cry, "They fly! they fly!"

THE UTILITY OF EVIL.

READER, do not be offended at the title of this short article, and call it impious. Will you say you never before heard that evil is useful? — Will you say the suggestion is wicked, and could be made by no other than one who is wicked? Well, suppose all which you imagine be true, may it not be well to be calm, and deliberately consider, that though you have never before heard of this thing, it may, notwithstanding, be a divine truth? If you will be candid, and bring your mind into a suitable condition to be reasoned with, we will call you to the consideration of questions which, if properly answered, will lead us into the true light of our subject. 1st. Is evil self-existent? If no one will allow this, there is no need of argument to disprove it. It follows, of course, that evil had a cause which produced it; this is self-evident. 2d. Is it not equally self-

evident that the cause which produced evil, is good? If we say that the cause which produced evil was evil, we thereby say that evil existed before it existed! When these several points are understood, we are prepared to state the following axioms:

1st. That which had no beginning, had no cause to produce it. 2d. If we should say that good had an origin or a cause, we should be compelled to say that that cause was evil! 3d. If we allow that evil had an origin or cause, we must allow that the origin of evil is good.

Will the reader now exclaim, and say, — This makes God the author of all the evil and sin which exist? Well, suppose it does, does that prove the axioms false? These are self-evident facts. That God is not the author of evil is not a self-evident fact. Two self-evident facts opposed to each other cannot exist.

That the position we here take is supported by divine authority, we show by the following passage: — Isa. xlv. 7, "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things."

Having arrived safely at the conclusion that God is the author or creator of evil, and having so done on scriptural as well as on logical authority, we feel safe in drawing the following inferences: — 1st. Divine wisdom comprehends the fact, that evil is useful to a definite end or purpose. 2d. That it cannot fail of answering the end for which it was designed.

Let us now proceed to consider the utility of evil. And we will do this by the light and guidance of divine truth. See Rom. iii. 5—8: "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just." By what is here quoted, we clearly see that it was a doctrine which Paul preached, that the unrighteousness of men commends the righteousness of God,

and that the truth of God abounds to his glory, through the falsehood of men. It is also evident that the enemies of the apostles understood enough of the doctrine of divine grace, to induce them to report the scandal, that they said, Let us do evil that good may come. By observing the last of Rom. v., and the first of vi., we see the same subject alluded to. "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Thus we see, that the slander which is so generally reported in our times, unfavorable to those who preach that where sin abounded grace much more abounds, was rife in the days of the apostles.

If unrighteousness or evil commend the righteousness of God, we see therein its utility. See Rom. v. 8: "But God commendeth his love

toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Can any one avoid seeing that this commendation of the love of God could never have been, if there had been no sinners? Such a commendation of the divine love as is here set forth, could never have been witnessed by the angels of God in heaven, nor could it ever have melted hard and sinful hearts into contrition and love, had sin never been. This subject may be well illustrated by an attention to what is embraced in the words of Jesus, where he says, "They that be whole need not a physician." Now, it is the sickness of the patient which commends the skill of the physician, and the virtue of the medicine which restores to health. All the medicines found in the mineral and vegetable kingdom would have been useless, and would have forever remained so, if there had been no disorders to be cured. And in this place it may be well to notice the impropriety of the slanderous report which has been mentioned above. The enemies of the truth say our doctrine leads into sin; and that, according to its teachings, we may do evil that good may come.

Why then, we ask, is it not reasonable to suppose, that the patient restored to health, should, on that account, endeavor to become sick again, that the skilful physician, with his efficacious medicine, may again cure him? Moreover, if our opposers contend, that, if we allow that God has a purpose to effect by moral evil, we may, on that account, endeavor to commit all the sin we can; we ask, in return, why ministers, who urge this argument, do not, when they visit the sick chambers of their parishioners, say to the sick, that as it is true that God sends sickness for wise and good purposes, they may, consistently, endeavor, not only to remain sick, but to increase their sickness by all possible means?

Who that has read of the conduct of Joseph, the son of Jacob, towards his brethren who sold him, and made himself well acquainted with his virtues, can fail to admire the man and his lovely character? But who will tell us how that admirable character, and those shining virtues, could ever have been known, or adorned the page of sacred history, if Joseph's brethren had never wronged him? Who can read the words of

Joseph to his brethren without tears? "And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you: and they came near. And he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . . But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Do we not see here the utility of evil; and the good end and purpose which God designed it for?

Another instance wherein our subject is most clearly seen, is the adorable character and wonderful grace exhibited in the sufferings and death of the Son of God. When we approach this subject, we feel our inability to do it justice, and realize the poverty of language to express its divine excellency. To multiply words, or to attempt to be eloquent on this subject, would surely offend against good taste. All who admire the Saviour, or realize the power of his love, must see and acknowledge, that if Jesus had had

no enemies, that love could not have been exhibited as it was in the prayer, — "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." As well might we expect to behold the rainbow with all its beautiful colors, without a cloud or any rain, as to behold the excellency of divine grace if no sin had existed. Who can so well appreciate the blessing of a physician, as the patient whose pains and sickness have been removed? Who can so prize the grace of the Redeemer, as those who say, — "Unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood?"

It is not to be expected that what we have here presented to the reader will be approved by all into whose hands it may fall. We are sensible that our views differ widely from the theology of the church, and the doctrines of the schools. Many, no doubt, will be surprised at the title which heads this short essay, and may regret to see anything so entirely new, and, to the public ear, uncouth. But let the reader consider, that it has been the business of the writer, during the many years of his ministry, to be constantly putting forth sentiments and opinions which were

offensive to the established doctrines of the church; but he has always been guided by an honest conviction, and a sense of duty. The sentiments set forth under the title of this article, have been long believed, and in many ways, and in many instances, exhibited to the public; but never before under such a title, and with a design to have them remain in such a form, as to invite special attention and investigation.

It may further serve our purpose here to suggest some queries for the consideration of our doctors. They all agree in the opinion that God spake unto the fathers by the prophets; and that the prophets spake of a vast variety of events which were to take place in different ages, and in different countries. They believe that the rise and fall of kingdoms were foretold, and the desolations of wars pointed out with great exactness. Now, we ask these doctors, how all this could be unless the whole was planned by that wisdom which foresaw it? Was it possible that any agency with which the Creator had endowed mankind, should work out results different from those spoken of by the prophets? Take, for

example, the prophecies concerning events from the founding of the ancient Persian empire by Cyrus, to the fall of the Roman, which comprehend events spoken of by Daniel. Now look at all the moral and physical evils which were embraced in, or exhibited by, the infinite multitude and variety of events, which took place through those ages, and say whether all those prophecies could have been fulfilled, and all this moral and physical evil have been avoided? As our doctors allow that God was the author of those prophecies, also of their fulfilment, also of all the benefits which have resulted from their fulfilment, will they endeavor to keep themselves in countenance while they say he was not the author of the evils? We have noticed the above section of time and prophecy only as an example of all times and prophecies. We further ask our doctors to consider the question, whether all those events above alluded to could have taken place, and all the evils have been avoided? Or could all those evils have occurred, and the prophecies not fulfilled? What we desire the reader to understand is, that what we call good and what

we call evil are so connected, and so essentially related, that the one cannot exist without the other, in the state of being in which mortal man exists.

Whoever takes an enlarged, enlightened view of the divine economy and government, must, we think, be convinced, that no wisdom, short of the wisdom of God, can claim the authorship, strictly speaking, of any event whatever. Let us, for a moment, look at simple facts, which lie within the compass of the most common capacity. There is no plan, scheme, or enterprise, which men contrive, but such as they are prompted to by circumstances with which they find themselves encompassed. Then it is plain enough that they are not, in a strict sense, the authors of these plans, or enterprises. They have their origin further back. If, even in imagination, we endeavor to trace back through events which must be numbered amongst the causes of these recent contrivances, we can never stop short of God himself. And the like is the case with regard to the inevitable consequences of those plans which are devised by men. Those who contrive them

can no more comprehend all which will in future result from what they contrive, than they can trace back through all events which are past, and which have caused them to devise what they have. It is often said by very pious and sincere persons, that we have reason to hope that God will finally so overrule all things as to have them terminate for the best. But if we do not understand that he, at all times, has the control of all events, what reason have we to believe that he ever will?

Hoping that none may be offended at what we here present to the reader, and affectionately requesting a candid examination of the whole subject, we close in the very appropriate words of St. Paul: — "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out? For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory forever. Amen."

EXAMINATION

OF

DR. CHANNING'S DISCOURSE ON THE EVIL OF SIN.

[The following Examination of Dr. Channing's Discourse on the Evil of Sin, was published in 1833, the year after the volume which contains the discourse was printed. Our readers will of course understand that the examination was before the public while the Doctor was living and maintaining his well-earned reputation as the oracle of the Christian sect, who justly considered him as their leader in this country. This circumstance is mentioned that all concerned may know that the Doctor had ample opportunity to have answered the arguments presented in the examination, if he had believed it advisable on any consideration to have done so. As this was never done, and as that excellent divine and scholar has been called away from earth, and left the discourse in a volume which will remain, perhaps, for ages, as a specimen of Unitarian doctrine of the present time, the writer of the examination has a desire to preserve it in a volume, which may remain among the people with whom he is connected, after he shall be with them on earth no more.]

THE arguments I am about to examine are found in the eighth discourse of a volume containing eleven discourses, printed in 1832. The title of the discourse is "THE EVIL OF SIN," the text, Proverbs xiv. 9 — "*Fools make a mock of sin.*"

All which the learned preacher has said in the first section of this discourse, for the purpose of showing that sin is the greatest evil which men experience in this life, is unexceptionable. His method of bringing his subject to the understanding, is as successful as his own perceptions are clear; and if it had been the end of his design to dissuade people from the commission of sin, by bringing into view the evils which attend it in the present world, where it exists, it seems that a better discourse could hardly have been expected on the same momentous subject.

But, before we get through the sermon, the scene changes. In room of enjoying a companion and a fellow-laborer in the holy conflict which moral virtue is carrying on against vice; in place of a champion in the cause of him whose divine commission authorizes him to "finish

transgression and to make an end of sin," we are surprised to meet a cool, determined opposer. It is plainly discoverable that, when the preacher commenced his work, his main design was an effort against the doctrine, which is now so rapidly prevailing, which relies on the fact that sin is fully punished in this world, where it is committed, to dissuade the transgressors from their erroneous ways.

When we look at the Doctor in the forepart of his discourse, we are pleased with arguments and illustrations evincing a clear understanding and a sound judgment; a mind, too, conversant with the dictates of reason, and perfectly free from the embarrassments of some of the obsolete dogmas of former times; and are inclined to the expectation that all is right; that the contest is in reality against sin; that he who is striving for the mastery will continue to strive lawfully, and be crowned. But, alas! before he is half through, we find him in combat with ourselves, and maintaining that sin makes, comparatively, a slight beginning in this world, and that its dominion

will be far more permanent, and its mischiefs far greater, in the world to come.

When I first read this discourse, and reflected that it was the production of a divine so much celebrated for his literary acquirements; so universally esteemed for his theological researches, and the purity of his writings; and one, too, whose labors I have prized as truly valuable and praised most sincerely; and when I further reflected that the sentiments contained in the discourse were such as the Doctor thought it his duty to bequeath to the religious society of which he has long been the pastor, I felt a sinking, a momentary enervation of mind, and a morbid gloom seemed to obscure mental vision.

Happy is it for frail man that the disorders of his mind are subject to the power of truth; that an hour of darkness may be succeeded by cheering light. It was not long that discouragement held its control. I again read the Doctor's arguments in support of the dire torments of the future state, and found that, as he had fully refuted his own premises, and by arguments

destroyed his arguments, it would be an easy task to present these facts to a candid public.

If I am asked by what motive I am induced to show wherein the Doctor's reasoning is unsound and contradictory, I answer: I am soberly of the opinion that his arguments give to our heavenly Father a character as directly contrary to moral goodness as any one can imagine. This conviction of my mind tells me that if I am able to contribute even one mite to the defence of the adorable perfections of God, it is a duty paramount to all others. To this primary consideration I may add, that I firmly believe that the very reverse of the Doctor's argument is a truth the best calculated to lead transgressors from the paths of disobedience into the ways of righteousness and peace.

The following quotation from the sermon under consideration, is from page 221.

"I have time but for one more view of moral evil or sin, showing that it is truly the greatest evil. It is this. The miseries of disobedience to conscience and God are not exhausted in this life. Sin deserves, calls for, and will bring down future greater misery. This Christianity

teaches, and this nature teaches. Retribution is not a new doctrine, brought by Christ into the world. Though darkened and corrupted, it was spread everywhere before he came. It carried alarm to rude nations, which nothing on earth could terrify. It mixed with all the false religions of antiquity, and it finds a response now in every mind not perverted by sophistry. That we shall carry with us into the future world our present minds, and that a character, formed in opposition to our highest faculties and to the will of God, will produce suffering in our future being, these are truths, in which revelation, reason, and conscience remarkably conspire."

Let us look carefully at some of these statements. "The miseries of disobedience to conscience and God are not exhausted in this life. Sin deserves, calls for, and will bring down future, greater misery. This Christianity teaches, and this nature teaches." What are these statements but bare assertions? Assertions too, which the Doctor knew were disbelieved by those whose doctrine he thought it his duty to notice, as the reader will perceive by the following, from the same page.

"I know, indeed, that this doctrine is sometimes ques-

tioned. It is maintained by some among us, that punishment is confined to the present state; that in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave. As this opinion is spread industriously, and as it tends to diminish the dread of sin, it deserves some notice. To my mind, a more irrational doctrine was never broached."

As the Doctor acknowledges that on account of the spread of the doctrine which opposes his statements it is worthy of notice, does it well become him to assume the premises in dispute, and in room of the least shadow of evidence, go on again to assume, and assert that Christianity and nature both teach just what he barely asserts? Does this well become the scholar, the Doctor of divinity? Would he think himself honorably and fairly treated, if treated thus? What does he think of us? He surely knows that we argue as we are in the habit of explaining the Christian Scriptures. Why, then, did he not present us with testimony from these Scriptures to prove that "the miseries of disobedience to conscience and to God are not exhausted in this life," and that "sin deserves, calls for, and

will bring down future, greater misery?" Not a single passage of Scripture has he quoted, or even referred to, in support of what he ventures to assert. Here queries arise which I know not how to solve. 1. Does the Doctor really believe that the Christian Scriptures do clearly teach what he asserts? We know it is uncharitable to doubt it. But can we reasonably believe that in such a case he should so far disregard the divine testimony, as to place his assertions in the very place where he could have quoted the word of truth? If the Scriptures teach his assertions, he can state the amount of his assertions in Scripture language, and refer us to the passage. How happens it that we are told that the Christian Scriptures teach what cannot be expressed in their language?

Suppose we reverse this case. Would the Doctor allow that we treated the subject in debate with conclusive fairness should we assert that "The miseries of disobedience to conscience and God are exhausted in this life, and that sin does not deserve, and that it does not call for, future, greater misery;" and then add, "This

Christianity teaches, and this nature teaches?" According to all acknowledged rules of fair reasoning we have just as good a right to assume this, and to assert this, as he has to make his assertions. As the Doctor would not allow such assumptions any validity if made by us, so he cannot expect that his mere assertions are in our estimation of any value.

Though we would not doubt the Doctor's candor when he describes, or endeavors to describe our sentiments, we very much regret that he should not have availed himself of the many opportunities and means within his convenience, of understanding the doctrine whose spread seems to give him alarm, and which he thinks it is his duty to disprove. He says — "It is maintained by some among us, that punishment is confined to the present state; that in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave." In place of these statements, if he had been rightly informed, he would have said, It is maintained by some among us that as neither Scripture nor reason show to us that sin will continue beyond

this state of flesh and blood, so neither do they prove that punishment for sin will so continue; that when we exchange worlds, and this corruptible puts on incorruption, our constitutions will be essentially changed, as is particularly described by St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; and that we shall be equal unto the angels, and shall die no more, as Jesus testified to the Sadducees.

We are sorry the Doctor should say that we maintain that moral evil is to be buried with our bodies in the grave, because he has no reason to believe this, and because it has too much the appearance of a canting throw at what he was not disposed to treat with his usual candor.

Another misrepresentation of our belief is found on page 222. "Let me next ask, what fact can be adduced in proof or illustration of the power ascribed to death, of changing and purifying the mind?" Here the Doctor would make his hearers believe that we ascribe to the death of the body the power to change and to purify the mind. He certainly never heard any of us state such views; nor has he ever read any

such statement in any of our writings. We never ascribed the power to change us from this state to another, to anything but God who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead; nor did we ever ascribe the power of cleansing us from sin to anything but that which the Scriptures mean by the "blood of the Lamb."

Our writings are before the public; if it had been his wish to state what we maintain, why should he not make use of our words? He could easily have done it. We complain of this neglect; we have occasion to complain that we are not treated by our opposer as he would be willing to be treated by us. Should he, as a minister of divine truth, stand up before a Christian congregation and misrepresent a doctrine which he would guard them against? For a few moments such misrepresentations may deceive, and his misguided hearers may condemn a sentiment which better information may lead them, at a future day, to embrace. Justice will certainly take place; the time will certainly come when the public will rightly judge in this case. Yes, after our brother, who thus opposes us now, and he who writes in

defence of what he misrepresents, have mouldered in the silent house of death, discerning eyes and candid hearts will judge of these things, and will judge correctly.

Our clerical opposers are much in the practice of stating to their congregations what they are pleased to call our sentiments and doctrine; but they are careful never to state them in the words, and in the way, in which we state them. On no consideration would they assent that we should stand in their pulpits, and state our views in our own way. But why, if they desire to state them themselves, why not let us state them? Then there would be no mistake. Nothing is more evident than the fact that they do not wish to have their hearers understand the real grounds of our belief.

But let us return to the Doctor's statements, in which we shall discover that his mind was not on the subject of sin in the future state, but on the continuance of the punishment of sin. "Sin deserves, calls for, and will bring down, future greater misery." He does not say that the sin which is committed in this life deserves, calls for,

and will bring down, future greater *sin;* but future greater *misery.* He has no heart, no desire, as expressed in this place, to vindicate the continuance and augmentation of sin in the future world; it is punishment, misery, which he so heartily maintains and so valiantly defends. In fact, it seems that we should do him injustice, if we should suppose that he means that an increase of sin was necessary in order to produce an increase of punishment; for that would involve the glaring absurdity, that a small degree of sin deserves, calls for, and therefore will attain, a greater degree of sin! It seems, therefore, evident that he means that the sin committed in this world, is to be punished with greater misery in the next world than that which it brings to the sinner in this. And this conclusion is further confirmed by a remark found on page 219, in which he asserts that sin never "meets its full retribution on earth." On page 224, he says: "It is plainly implied in Scripture, that we shall suffer much more from sin, evil tempers, irreligion, in the future world, than we suffer here." Again, on page 229, "The Scriptures announce a state of

more exact and rigorous retribution than in the present." Page 226, "In the state of retribution, he who has abused the present state will find no such means of escaping the wages of sin."

If we duly consider these quotations, and connect them as we ought, we are at once at a loss to know whether the Doctor understood his own statements. They certainly make out that every sin ever committed in this mortal state will be more severely punished in the future than it will have been in this; and that every individual of the human family, who has ever sinned in this world, or whoever shall sin in this mortal state, will be more rigorously punished in the world to come than in this! Now, we honestly say, that we do not feel confident that the Doctor means this; but it is unavoidable from his statements. Should he ever condescend to explain himself on this subject, (which we do not expect,) so as to show how any of our sinful race can avoid those awful miseries of the future world, will he at the same time be careful not to open a door for the escape of all!

Having shown that the Doctor is utterly con-

fused in the labyrinth of his own unsupported assertions, we will next proceed to show that he has completely overthrown the very foundation on which his whole scheme is founded. He means to be understood to found his doctrine of future retribution on the moral or free agency of man. See on page 224.

"In the present world, sin does indeed bring with it many pains, but not full or exact retribution, and sometimes it seems crowned with prosperity; and the cause of this is obvious. The present world is a state for the formation of character. It is meant to be a state of trial, where we are to act freely, to have opportunities of wrong as well as right action, and to become virtuous amidst temptation. Now, such a purpose requires that sin, or wrong-doing, should not regularly and infallibly produce its full and immediate punishment. For, suppose, my hearers, that at the very instant of a bad purpose, or a bad deed, a sore and awful penalty were unfailingly to light upon you, would this be consistent with trial? Would you have moral freedom? Would you not live under compulsion? Who would do wrong, if judgment were to come like lightning after every evil deed?"

Here we have the foundation of the Doctor's scheme of future retribution. The whole con-

sists, it is true, of his assertions. He brings proof of nothing. We are to take his bare word for the whole, and we are glad that such a scheme of consummate deceit and wickedness has no better support than his assertions. He represents the Divine Being as contriving, by means of delaying punishment, to let temptations succeed in leading this moral agent into sin, for the purpose of inflicting a misery in the future world, to which the present is a stranger! A worse character than this will never disgust the fine feelings of moral goodness. What should we think of a father, who should place his child in the way of a temptation which should expose it to plunge down a fearful and fatal precipice, and use every precaution to give success to the allurement? Is this a specimen of free agency? Is our Heavenly Father the author of such free agency? Let our Doctor describe what he would call a system of wicked craftiness, that we may see the difference, if there be any.

But the Doctor destroys all his pretended freedom, for which he contends. He says, as before quoted — "Sin deserves, calls for, and will bring

down, future greater misery." Thus he makes out that the very punishment which would destroy our freedom, and place us under compulsion, will actually come upon us. We shall then be freed from our freedom; be no longer moral agents, and of course, according to the whole scheme of the Doctor, not subjects of moral discipline. He thinks that if the divine ruler should suddenly, in this world, bring on the transgressor a full retribution for his evil deeds, it would destroy moral liberty at once, and place the creature under the law of compulsion. What great account can be justly made of the few moments of fleeting time before this full retribution will be upon us? But who can dread it? It will put an end to moral agency, to moral accountability, and to moral sufferings. Thus has he, by round assertions, without attempting to prove anything by Scripture testimony, set up a system founded on his imaginary agency, and fully succeeded, by the same sort of means, to destroy the whole! In the coming world all this free agency is to be crushed in a moment.

But is the Doctor really willing to let his agency be quite free in this world? It seems

that he is endeavoring to overcome it even here. Why does he suppose that immediate, full punishment would overcome our freedom, and by compulsion prevent our wrong-doing? Answer; because our fear would be so great that it would compel us to avoid the evil act. He says, page 225, "Who would do wrong, if judgment were to come like lightning after every evil deed? In such a world, fear would suspend our liberty and supersede conscience." Well, the next world is just such, as he asserts, and there no one will do wrong, our liberty will be suspended, and our conscience superseded. And he is even now endeavoring to frighten us with his horrid picture of future misery, on purpose that our dread may prevent our committing sin. Will he attempt to show, that if he succeeds in his endeavor to excite our fear to such a degree as to prevent our wrong-doing, he will not thereby suspend our liberty and supersede our conscience? Why should the fear of immediate retribution any more suspend our liberty and supersede our conscience, than the fear of a future retribution, provided that both so operate as to prevent our doing wrong?

If the Doctor will maintain any claim to moral philosophy, let him answer this query.

Another instance in which the Doctor has succeeded in an entire refutation of his notion of man's agency and freedom, we find in the following, on pages 221, 222. In reference to the doctrine which he thinks it his duty to oppose, he says:

"To my mind a more irrational doctrine was never broached. In the first place, it contradicts all our experience of the nature and laws of the mind. There is nothing more striking in the mind than the connection of its successive states. Our present knowledge, thoughts, feelings, characters, are the results of former impressions, passions and pursuits. We are this moment what the past has made us; and to suppose that, at death, the influences of our whole past course are to cease on our minds, and that a character is to spring up altogether at war with what has preceded it, is to suppose the most important law or principle of the mind to be violated, is to destroy all analogy between the present and future, and to substitute for experience the wildest dreams of fancy."

Wherein does the Doctor suppose that the force of the above argument consists? Answer; as

we are this moment what the past has made us, we must, the next moment, be what the present will make us. Where, then, is the moment to be found in which we exercise a free agency? Never was free agency more fully disproved, if we allow the correctness of his reasoning. But he has as fully refuted his own statements of the analogy between this and the future state, as he has free agency. He has labored with his usual ingenuity, beginning on page 224, to set forth the astonishing difference between this state and the next. Just as if he had altogether forgotten his scheme of analogy, it now seems to be his endeavor to make the two states extremely different. He says, "I ask you to pause and weigh this distinction between the present and the future." The reason why he wishes to make this vast difference between the present state and the future, is that he may hereafter deprive us of every possible enjoyment which the present affords. And the reason why he wishes to maintain his analogy between the two states, is for the purpose of carrying sin into the future. A picture more appalling, more withering to virtu-

ous hope, and blasting to the aspirations of mercy and compassion, was never drawn. Angels of mercy, deliver us from a fiend that would blot out the sun, the moon and the stars, and destroy every beauty, and all the loveliness of creation, but preserve sin with maternal fondness! Had the Doctor's eye but caught a glimpse of this haggard form, his affectionate heart, his benevolent soul, would have frozen.

Is this the divine who has justly accused cruel Orthodoxy of depriving our Creator of his fatherly character, and of making him an unmerciful tyrant? Is this the preacher who, in sermons delivered in southern cities, has maintained the universal and impartial goodness of our Father in heaven, with a success that is completely triumphant? Why, then, does he, in his own city, and to his own beloved congregation, represent the supreme, the merciful, the good ruler of the universe, as capable of devising and executing a scheme to preserve sin and perpetuate evil, and to render them unmixed with all the good with which they are here connected?

It is not a little surprising that the Doctor should not have discovered the manifest defect of his reasoning, when he endeavors to show that in this world vice, in room of being fully punished, is often attended with pleasures. On page 225, he says:

"Accordingly sin, though, as we have seen, it produces great misery, is still left to compass many of its objects, often to prosper, often to be gain. Vice, bad as it is, has often many pleasures in its train. The worst men partake, equally with the good, the light of the sun, the rain, the harvest, the accommodations and improvements of civilized life, and sometimes accumulate more largely outward goods. And thus sin has its pleasures, and escapes many of its natural and proper fruits. We live in a world where, if we please, we may forget ourselves, may delude ourselves, may intoxicate our minds with false hopes, and may find for a time a deceitful joy in an evil course. In this respect the future will differ from the present world."

If we carefully inquire for the specific objects which the Doctor had in view while penning the foregoing, we shall discover the two following: First, to show that in the divine economy the full retribution of sin is held in reserve, and suc-

cess granted to vice for the purpose of giving an opportunity for the free agent to practise wrong-doing, which he would not if he expected immediate retribution. And, second, to show the wide difference between this and the coming state. According to his statements, it is evident that he believes that, in order for man to practise sin, it is necessary that its punishment should be delayed and out of sight, and that vice should give, at least, some assurance of success. How, then, is it possible for him to maintain the existence of sin in a state where it can offer no temptation by promised success, and where, should a vestige of it be found, a full retribution would effectually suspend our liberty and supersede our conscience? If the future state is so entirely different from this, that we shall there be altogether without our moral agency, and free from the least temptation to do wrong, how is sin to exist?

The reason which the Doctor assigns why he notices the doctrine which teaches that the adequate retributions of sin are suffered in this

world, he states on page 221, as follows: "As this opinion is spread industriously, and as it tends to diminish the dread of sin, it deserves some notice." Thus we find him in one breath contending that if punishment was expected immediately, no one would commit any sin; and in the next, he is equally confident that the doctrine which supposes the punishment of sin is immediate, and in the very state in which it is committed, "diminishes the dread of sin." Such palpable contradictions from a divine justly celebrated for some of those best writings which honor the present age, are next to unaccountable. They form an admonishing specimen of the power of an allowed, a settled, and cultivated bigotry.

For the purpose of maintaining the opinion that vice will continue after natural death, the Doctor queries as follows, on page 223:

"Lop off the criminal's hands; does the disposition to do mischief vanish with them? When the feet mortify, do we see a corresponding mortification of the will to go astray? The loss of sight or hearing is a partial death; but is a single vice plucked from the mind, or one of its

strong passions palsied, by the destruction of its chief corporeal instruments?"

If we allow these queries the force which the Doctor gives them, we must believe that all the strong passions which here evidently arise from our fleshly constitutions will continue when flesh and blood are no more. But will he abide this conclusion? will he contend that all the most faithful, the most exemplary Christians, who have, with much good success, conflicted with those lusts which have too often triumphed over others of our frail race, will be obliged to meet and contend with the same lusts, and strong passions, in the future world? Then what assurance have we that those who have here maintained a good conflict may not hereafter yield to foes which will triumph over the dissolution of flesh and blood, and attack them hereafter, with all the vigor they ever have possessed? It is not so rare an instance of human weakness as we could wish it was, that those, who for many years have been esteemed for sobriety and their many virtues, have fallen unhappy victims to some lust or passion which triumphed over their

fortitude; and served as an admonition to those who think they stand, to take heed lest they fall. If such instances are lamented in this world, have we not reason to fear they will be deplored in the next, if the Doctor's argument be allowed? And how do we know that St. Paul has not been for ages a miserable slave to that law in his members which he said warred against the law of his mind? Rom. vii. 23.

Part of what has been quoted from page 222, in which the Doctor disallows so great a change at death as he ascribes to the doctrine he opposes, may be examined in connection with the change of character which was effected in Paul at his conversion to Christianity. Surely it does not become the moral philosopher, who is a minister of the divine word of reconciliation, to contend that at death, or at any other time, it is not consistent with the wisdom of God and the laws of the human mind, to effect as great a change as we are informed in Scripture has been effected for the holy purposes for which St. Paul was converted. When Paul was on his way to Damascus, exceedingly mad and breathing out threaten-

ings against the defenceless disciples of Jesus, he was, that moment, just what the past had made him. But how suddenly were his views, his feelings, and his desires, as totally changed as it would be necessary to change any sinner to a saint! Will the Doctor allow that any violence was done to St. Paul's free agency? If not, then so great a change may be effected as suddenly in any other man, without destroying his free agency.

If he takes the other ground, and says that this was a miracle, in which the laws of the human mind were suspended, then he furnishes data to allow that such a miracle may be performed at death, or at any other time. Suppose, reader, that it had so happened that some one poor, miserable, degraded sinner had, as it were, by mere accident, dropped into the Doctor's meeting, and heard the sermon now under examination; and suppose it had the very effect on his mind which the preacher would most heartily desire, would this man not have gone away with views, desires, and feelings, as different from those which his mind possessed when he entered the house, as

we can easily imagine? Why then is there such an alarm taken at the suggestion that possibly no sin will exist in the future state? Those who seem distressed with apprehensions at this suggestion, would put a stop to all sin this very day, if it were in their power. Let us inquire how our good, pious Christians would conduct themselves, if they were persuaded to believe, that, after the expiration of twelve months, there would not be, in this world, nor in the universe, a single soul who should possess one sinful thought or desire, and that all moral beings would be as holy as the angels of God? Would they lament that all restraint was removed, and nothing remained to prevent indulgence in sin? Would they say, we must now improve our time in the pleasures of hating God and one another; for we must soon be deprived of this privilege, and be obliged to love our Father in heaven, and each other, forever?

As it respects the subject of a religious or moral change, and the necessary time which is required in which to effect it, it seems reasonable that we should not limit the power of the divine

spirit. There are, in Scripture, two extreme characters set forth. The self-righteous Pharisee, who has undoubting confidence in his high moral attainments, and looks down on others with what he thinks is a holy scorn, and thanks God that he is not as other men; and the irreligious, impious and profane, who heeds not the commandments of either God or man, and indulges his fleshly appetites without restraint. Now, as it respects the time necessary to be occupied by the power of that spirit by which the change must be made, in order to complete the work, it certainly does not become us to set any limits. With God all things are possible. Jesus could, in the same given time, cast seven devils out of Mary, and bring Saul, the Pharisee, to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When we hear the professed disciples of him who was meek and lowly in spirit, dwell with much complacency on the vast advantages which such as have here acquired what they call high moral attainments will enjoy hereafter, over their fellow-creatures who fall short of those immense heights, it calls to our recollection the estimation

in which the Pharisees of our Saviour's time held themselves, and the habitual scorn and contempt which they manifested towards others, whom they called sinners. They certainly manifest the same spirit, and as great darkness of understanding, as did those of old who said, "Have any of the rulers, or the Pharisees, believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed." To such Jesus said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Nothing can be more inconsistent with the sentiments and feelings of that grateful heart, which enjoys the forgiveness of sin, than this breathing out of divine retributions, of unmerciful punishments on sinners.

The Doctor thinks it irrational to suppose that death can effect so great a change in man as to discontinue sin or wrong-doing. But does he not rely on death to effect as great a change in those whom he would call religious people? Why does he labor to dissuade people from the commission of sin? Is it not for the love he feels for them? Is it not that he may, if possible, be the means of preventing their suffering such

severe and rigorous retributions, in the world to come, as he has so eloquently described? And in all this is he not a true and fair representative of all those divines who are engaged in the same holy work? And to this company of lovers of sinners may we not add the whole vast community of the faithful on earth? Are they not, all their life long, in possession of the spirit of our high priest, who has compassion on the ignorant, and on such as are out of the way? And as these disciples of him, who gave himself a ransom for all men, who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, draw near the close of their earthly pilgrimage, does not their ardor increase, their pity for sinners deepen, and their love of souls grow stronger? Now, as all these questions must be answered in the affirmative, I ask the Doctor if death must not so change this innumerable company of saints as to deliver them forever from this spirit of Jesus, and from its holy desires? If they, after death, retain this spirit, if in the future world they are exercised with this love and pity, what must be their condition? Happy? No: for what they here fear

and dread with horror will then be realized. Parents will see their children separated from God and themselves, enduring the dire retributions from which they so anxiously prayed for their deliverance while in this life. Circumstanced thus, should they have for these wretched sufferers the holy love, and gracious pity, without which, in this world, they would not be real Christians, they must be inconceivably wretched! But if the death of saints will effect a change in them so great as to render them entirely destitute of care or concern for those whom they loved and pitied in this life, it will effect a greater change than the discontinuance of sin; because that charity, which here covers a multitude of sins, is greater than sin.

I have no disposition to insinuate that the Doctor believes that all the graces which beautify and adorn, and give a character to the saints on earth, will be buried in the grave; for though it seems to be consistent with his reasoning, it looks too much like treating him as he has treated us.

If our opposers are determined to support the doctrine of a future state of sin and misery, by

what they call analogy between the present state and the future, let them be consistent; and then they will increase the love and pity of the saints hereafter in the same ratio as they increase the sin and misery of the wicked.

For one, I do not pretend to know what will be the state of all mankind, nor even of any one, after death, further than Scripture testimony shows. But I am willing to say that I do not believe that the Christian Scriptures anywhere teach that men will sin out of this state of flesh and blood; nor do I believe that it is necessary, to awaken in me or anybody else a love to our Creator and to our fellow-creatures, that we believe that some of the human family will sin in the future world.

On pages 226, 227, after speaking of the many means to which sinners can resort, in this world, to alleviate the pains of sin, the Doctor says:

"In the state of retribution, he who has abused the present state will find no such means of escaping the wages of sin. The precise mode in which such a man is to exist hereafter I know not. But I know that it will offer nothing to amuse him, to dissipate thought, to turn

him away from himself; nothing to which he can fly for refuge from the inward penalties of transgression."

All this he says he knows. Would he be willing to take his oath of it? It is seriously doubted. How does he know that hereafter the man who has abused the present state may not meet with Him, who once in the temple said to the accusers of an unhappy sinner, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone," and who said to the sinner, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more?" Is there no analogy between this state and the future?

When we lay aside our sectarian prejudices, and look within ourselves; when we take an impartial survey of those frailties which are common to us all, in place of dooming others to hopeless misery, we feel more like saying, "God be merciful to us sinners!"

The Doctor presumes to inform us how the wicked will furnish themselves with bodies hereafter, suited to the designs of unspeakable torments. He says, on page 227:

"Now in the present state we find that the mind has an immense power over the body, and, when diseased,

often communicates diseases to its sympathizing companion. I believe, that in the future state the mind will have this power of conforming its outward frame to itself, incomparably more than here. We must never forget, that, in that world, mind or character is to exert an all-powerful sway; and accordingly, it is rational to believe that the corrupt and deformed mind, which wants moral goodness or a spirit of concord with God and with the universe, will create for itself, as its fit dwelling, a deformed body, which will also want concord or harmony with all things around it."

Let the reader carefully examine the above quotation, and ask the question, does the author attempt to prove anything he says? Then let him recollect that, on page 222, the Doctor accuses those whose views he opposes "of substituting for experience the wildest dreams of fancy." If wilder dreams of fancy ever entered the human imagination than he has set forth, we say they have never come to our knowledge.

Just above what we last quoted from page 227, the Doctor says: "The Scriptures strongly imply, if not positively teach, that in the future life we shall exist in connection with some material frame; and afterwards, as we have seen, sup-

poses that the mind creates this body for itself! Do we not now exist in connection with a material frame? Surely. Did our minds create this frame? No. Did our minds ever exist out of this frame? Not that we know of. If we exist hereafter, will our minds be conscious before we have the corporeal frame of which the Doctor speaks? If not, what will our minds do towards creating that frame, more than they did to create our present bodies? But if our minds first exist and exercise consciousness, before we have our bodies, then bodies are not necessary to that hereafter state, as we can exist without them. They may be mere conveniencies with which we may accommodate ourselves, if we please!

How are we to account for this kind of treatment of the momentous subject of a future existence, by one who professes to be a disciple of Jesus? Did the divine teacher authorize him, or any one else, to hold up such vague notions! Why should we not be contented to believe nothing concerning our future existence, except what can be expressed in the language of inspiration? By neglecting that, and giving ourselves

up to our own wisdom, do we not manifest too much disregard of a favor we affect to prize? Have not the injurious and even disgraceful divisions in the Christian church grown out of this unwarrantable practice?

Surely, Jesus gave a very different account of our future existence from what the Doctor sets forth. He said, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven." St. Paul says, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Does the apostle teach us, as does the Doctor, that we are to form our own bodies in the resurrection state? He says, "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him. . . . It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Again the apostle says: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The Scriptures abound with instances of severe retributions for the sins of individuals as well as of whole communities; but in none of the accounts which are recorded do we find the least intimation that any part was reserved for a future state. And it is evident, even if such terrible sufferings do in fact await us hereafter, that it has been wisely kept from our knowledge. God has not seen fit to reveal it.

I have not the least desire to impugn the motives which induced the Doctor to endeavor to awaken the fears of his congregation, and to plant in their very souls the most horrible apprehensions of unmerciful sufferings hereafter, if such was his purpose. I can easily conceive how he could mean it for their good. But I soberly believe that the less that very respectable congregation entertains of such fearful apprehensions, the better it is for them, and for their morals. And nothing can be better supported by Scripture and experience, than that such fear is directly hostile to that love which is begotten in the heart by the manifestation of the divine goodness, and which casts out fear, which hath tor-

ment. Can the Doctor endure his own sentiments? We will try him. Suppose, then, that some one of his church has a wayward son, who has contracted the worst of habits, and is confirmedly vicious. Violent sickness prostrates the youth, and father, mother, brothers and sisters, stand around his dying bed, and call on the Doctor for prayers. Would he stand there and say, as on page 226, "In the state of retribution, he who has abused the present state will find no means of escaping the wages of sin?" No; his heart is too tender; there is too much compassion in his soul to do this. What would he do? He would present to the dying youth that hope which entereth within the vale, and that boundless love and mercy by which the most foul stains of sin are cleansed. And this he would do in such soothing language, and with such a spirit of grace, as would penetrate the faltering heart of the dying with the energies of a spiritual life. It is a subject of felicitation that the opinions of divines, respecting the miseries of the future state, are merely speculative; and that they never bring them near themselves, nor apply

them to their friends. Such doctrines are for the wicked, who are somewhere, no one knows where!

But it is time to inquire after the design or purpose for which the Doctor believes the miseries of the state of retribution are to be inflicted. Has he told us what benefit is finally to result from such dire sufferings? He has not. He says on pages 229, 230:

"I have spoken of the pains and penalties of moral evil, or of wrong doing, in the world to come. How long they will endure, I know not. Whether they will issue in the reformation and happiness of the sufferer, or will terminate in the extinction of his conscious being, is a question on which Scripture throws no clear light."

Here, then, after all this solemn parade about future retribution, he is not certain, in his own mind, whether it will do any good or not! He certainly does not want it for any good that he thinks will be effected by it. Reader, what does the Doctor want this awful future punishment for? He has assigned no reason at all why he wants it; but we know what he wants it for. Reader, you were casting in your mind that the

Doctor wants future punishment to frighten his congregation with; to make them love God and one another; to make them love holiness, and practise Christian virtues. Can you believe that he wants it for such purposes? Can fear drive us to love God and virtue? That mind that can believe it must be in gross darkness. But surely, you will say, the Doctor certainly intended to fill his hearers with the most fearful apprehensions. By no means. If the Doctor had frightened one of his hearers, and that frightened hearer had gone to him in trouble about the matter, he would, with all the powers of his mind, have exerted himself to remove such distress. What, then, you ask, does he want this future punishment for? He wants it for the purpose of opposing those who do not believe it. He did not preach this sermon with a view to convince those against whose sentiments he directed his arguments. They are Universalists; and he knows that Universalists, if convinced at all, must be convinced, not by assertions without proof, but by arguments directly drawn from the holy Scriptures. If it had been his design to

convince us, he would have been careful to state our views in our words; and then he would have endeavored to show us that the very Bible to which we go to prove our doctrine, does in fact disprove it. But, in room of anything like this, he has proceeded as unlike it as possible. He knew that his hearers had always been in the habit of hearing his assertions, and he had no doubt but they would believe them as usual. There was no need of any Scripture proof, and therefore none was brought.

Some of the reasons which have induced me to disprove the arguments, in the sermon under examination, were mentioned in the commencement, and it may not be amiss to add a few suggestions more on that subject in concluding. I have been long convinced of the fact, that the doctrine of an unmerciful retribution in the world to come, for sins committed in this mortal state, gives to our Creator the very worst character that the human mind can conceive. It is atheism, gross atheism, to pretend that such a state of suffering can exist, without allowing that its existence was originally embraced in the vast

scheme of the divine purposes. I furthermore feel confident that the maintenance of such a sentiment, in human society, is calculated to harden the hearts of men, and of women, and of children; and thereby to embitter their affections towards each other, to fill them with disgust against God and hatred to their fellow-creatures. In support of this view I will refer to a fact generally known, and which the Doctor has justly mentioned on page 221, as follows: Speaking of this future retribution, he says, "Retribution is not a new doctrine, brought by Christ into the world. Though darkened and corrupted, it was spread everywhere before he came. It carried alarm to rude nations, which nothing on earth could terrify. It mixed with all the false religions of antiquity." This testimony is true; and if its not being brought into the world by Jesus Christ, and its having been mixed with all the false religions of antiquity, recommend it to the Doctor, all I will say is, that I am glad it has no better recommendation. He might have added, that this awful doctrine has always been one of the main pillars of Popery, and the sole cause of

all the persecutions which have swept many millions of innocent beings from the earth, and fixed a stigma on the Christian church that will never be defaced until the doctrine is exploded. I call on the Doctor to trace bloody persecution to any other cause or source than that of unmerciful retribution. If John Calvin had not believed in the doctrine of future retribution, would he have procured the burning of Servetus? If the Church of Rome had not believed it. would it have put millions to death for heresy? If our early settlers of New England had not believed it, would they have hung peaceful Quakers? No; none of these persecutions would ever have disgraced human nature if it had not been for this unmerciful doctrine, which is perfectly calculated to harden the human heart, and to fill it with the same kind of wrath which it always supposes exists in God. I have no doubt of the truth of the Doctor's testimony. It is unquestionably true that the Scribes and Pharisees, who procured the death of the Son of God, were sound believers in this doctrine. I have no reason to doubt that the whole estate of the priests and

elders, who were the murderers of Jesus, believed this doctrine. For had they been persuaded that life and immortality are an inheritance which our Creator has in store for all men, they certainly would not have put to death the Lord of Glory.

Lastly; I have a strong desire to do all I can to fix the attention of my fellow-men, and especially the youth, on the fact, that vice, of every sort and kind, is hateful in its nature; that it always brings a full and an exact retribution with it; and that it ought, therefore, to be cautiously shunned. This view of the case, I feel confident, is the best possible safeguard against unlawful indulgences. Would people try any harder to avoid the cholera, if they believed that it brought many present enjoyments, but that, if we should happen to die with it, we should be sent away into some gloomy place hereafter, where we should be employed in making for ourselves ugly and deformed bodies?

Among other reasons for endeavoring to disprove the doctrine of unmerciful punishment, I assign the gloomy infelicity, and painful anxieties

of many, especially among the lovely daughters of our race, which owe their corrosive gnawings to this doctrine. It is not very rare that we find the most amiable minds, the softest hearts, the loveliest tempers, the kindest dispositions, all withering beneath this deadly poison. Many are the families which are this moment deploring the loss to their society of those with whom they have trodden the flowers of a few happy springs, and have plucked the roses of a few joyful summers, but who are now gone to the dwellings of maniacs, or to the more enviable house of the dead. If I could be the means of preventing a single case of this kind, it would be a very rich reward for the labor it might cost, and a tenfold compensation for all the reproaches which I am sure of receiving therefor.

To conclude: if I have, in this examination, exposed the errors and contradictions with which I have met, in any way to the prejudice of their author, I humbly ask forgiveness; for I do certainly entertain sentiments of unfeigned respect for the author of the sermon I have examined. And if I have penned a sentiment which is not

according to godliness, I pray to be enlightened, so that I may correct the error; and that it may be discerned and rejected by every reader.

While writing the foregoing examination, several particulars, which to me appeared unsound, in the Doctor's theory, were, for the sake of being brief, passed without notice; some of which will be here called in question. By connecting several passages in the sermon. which seem to indicate an independence of the mind of man on the body — and as being distinct from its power or influence — and as being capable of existing without it, we have a subject of discussion, which requires something more convincing than mere assertions to justify a final decision.

Page 222, the Doctor says:

"What is death? It is the dissolution of certain limbs and organs by which the soul now acts. But these, however closely connected with the mind, are entirely distinct from its powers, from thought and will, from conscience and affection. Why should the last grow pure from the dissolution of the first? Why shall the mind put on a

new character, by laying aside the gross instruments through which it now operates?"

Page 223:

"Lop off the criminal's hands; does the disposition to do mischief vanish with them? When the feet mortify, do we see a corresponding mortification of the will to go astray? The loss of sight or hearing is a partial death; but is a single vice plucked from the mind, or one of its strong passions palsied, by the destruction of its chief corporeal instruments?"

Page 227:

"It can hardly be thought, that in a creation which is marked by gradual change and progress, we should make at once the mighty transition from our present state into a purely spiritual or unembodied existence . . . . . And, accordingly, it is rational to believe that the corrupt and deformed mind, which wants moral goodness, or a spirit of concord with God and with the universe, will create for itself, as its fit dwelling, a deformed body, which will also want concord or harmony with all things around it."

Judging of the Doctor's theory from the bearings of the foregoing quotations from his sermon, and from the evident design of the preacher, as manifested by the connection in which these pas-

sages are found, we are led to suppose that he believes that all moral evil, all vice or wrong-doing, in which men have ever employed their mental or physical powers, originated, not from a body composed of flesh and blood, but in a mind which is distinct from the body, and which uses the several parts and members of the body as mere instruments convenient for accomplishing its own evil purposes. Also, that this mind of man, being thus distinct from the body and its organization, does exist with all its powers and passions, when the body is dead, in an unembodied state, where it creates for itself, "as its fit dwelling, a deformed body," &c.

In the first place, there is no little reason to doubt the correctness of the opinion, that all moral evil originates in the mind, and not from elementary power. What desire ever influenced the will to an evil act, that did not originate from some passion or appetite of the body? If I have not entirely failed in my researches into the truth concerning this subject, there is no propensity in man to evil deeds, that does not owe its origin to fleshly lusts. James says, "Every man

is tempted when he is drawn away with his own lusts, and enticed. Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Chap. i. 14, 15. Paul says, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 15—17. Again, Rom. vii. 23: "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity unto the law of sin which is in my members." These divine declarations, which are evidently corroborated by every man's experience, should weigh more as evidence in the case now under consideration than the Doctor's assertions to the contrary.

The reader will readily perceive why the Doctor is unwilling to allow that sin is the natural fruit of the flesh. If he allowed this, he would at once see, that when flesh and blood are dis-

solved in dust, its fruit can no longer be produced.

Secondly: respecting the Doctor's notion (for I can give it no higher title) that the mind of man, after the death of the body, exists as mind, and then creates for itself a body, I would call on him to show, from the testimony of the Scriptures, that he has any authority for it. St. Paul says, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1. Will the Doctor condescend to show that his opinion is more correct than the one expressed by the apostle? I know of no passage in the Scriptures, which, taken in its true meaning, teaches us to believe that man has any sentient existence between this state of flesh and blood, and that state which is promised in the resurrection. In his vindication of the doctrine of the resurrection, St. Paul says, as has before been quoted, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a

natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. 42—44. But be it remembered that the apostle never hinted that this change was effected by the death of the body; but says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. iii. 20, 21.

SALVATION IRRESPECTIVE OF CHARACTER.

THERE is, at this time, no objection to the doctrine of Universal Salvation more pertinaciously insisted on by its opposers, than that the doctrine teaches that all men are to be saved irrespective of moral character, and in violation of the freedom of man's will. The objection supposes that Universalists believe and teach that God has decreed the happiness of all men, and that he will make them thus happy and forever blessed, be their moral characters what they may; holy or unholy; clean or unclean; righteous or wicked. The amount of the objection is, that the doctrine contends that as God will have all men to be saved, he will save them whether they will or not; whether they repent of their sins or not; whether they reform or remain sinful.

If we ask any opposer of Universalism whether

he ever heard a Universalist state his doctrine as here described, or ever read such a representation of the doctrine in any writer who wrote in defence of the doctrine, he will answer in the negative; but at the same time will say, that the doctrine implies all this, and must thus be supported, or not supported at all. Now, if we do, as we always wish to do, exercise charity, and allow that our opposers are honest in alleging such an objection to Universalism, we must offend them by believing and saying that their objection, in room of disproving the truth of Universal salvation, proves, beyond all controversy, that they are utterly ignorant of the nature of salvation, and know nothing concerning the process by which it is effected.

The old doctrine of the church, ever since the corruptions of Christianity, has taught that salvation means a salvation from hell in a future state, or from the wrath of God, which means the same; or from the punishment of sin, which also means the same. But concerning such a salvation the Scriptures nowhere speak; and in such a salvation no well-informed Universalist believes.

The Universalist believes in a salvation which he finds set forth in the Scriptures of divine authority. This is a salvation from sin. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Thus said the angel to Joseph. Now suppose Joseph had asked the angel, whether Jesus would save his people from their sins irrespective of their moral characters? whether he would save them from their sins even if they continued to live in sin? Would not Joseph in this have shown, that either he did not understand the nature of salvation, or that there was insincerity in his question? Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." What sense would there have been in the question, if any one had asked him if he came to call sinners to repentance irrespective of moral character? Jesus said that he was the "bread of God which came down from heaven to give life to the world." Suppose he had been asked, if he would give life to the world, irrespective of moral character? In what light would the question present him who asked it? Jesus represented the process of the sinner's salvation,

by the recovery of a lost sheep, which had gone astray — by the owner who went after it, found it, and carried it home on his own shoulder; and applied his parable by saying, "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Who recovered the sheep that was lost? The owner. Who saves the sinner? Jesus Christ. How does he save him? By bringing him to repentance. Does he do this irrespective of moral character? The reader sees that the question proves either the ignorance or insincerity of him who asks it.

God spake to the house of Israel on this wise, by Ezekiel: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Here let us hear the learned divine of our times, ask the grave question, whether God

meant he would do all this for his people, irrespective of their moral character? Could God do this without working an entire change of their moral character? Look at these words: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." Here comes the wonderful, the profound question, — Will God sprinkle *clean* water on that which is unclean? By the prophet Isaiah, God said he would give his elect "a covenant of the people; for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes; to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Does not the darkness of the Gentiles indicate their moral condition; and their blindness and imprisonment their sinful state? And if Christ is to them a light, and if he opens their eyes, and brings them out of their sinful condition, is it reasonable to bring the objection to all this, that it is irrespective of moral character; that it does not allow the freedom of the human will? Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes; to turn them from darkness to light; from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the remission of sins, and an

inheritance among all them who were sanctified by faith which was in him." Was all this to be done irrespective of moral character? Does it not necessarily imply an entire change of moral character? Could any sincere person reasonably object to all this, because it is unconditional as to moral character? Malachi, speaking of the coming of the Messiah, says: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." As no one can doubt that moral purification is here signified, would it not be a most unreasonable objection to the passage to say that this promise of purifying is irrespective of moral character?

St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, thus exhorts: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might

present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Now, as the same apostle informs us that the one mediator between God and men gave himself a ransom for all men, it is evident that he considered all men members of Christ's church, and that he gave himself for this church because he loved it in its unclean state, and that he gave himself for the church, that he might purify and cleanse it. How will the objection lie against the accomplishment of this work of purifying mankind, that it is irrespective of moral character? To Titus, Paul, speaking of our Saviour Jesus Christ, says: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Shall we object to the accomplishment of this work of purification, because it is irrespective of moral character? When the Saviour was accused of being a friend to publicans and sinners, his reply was, "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." By this we learn that Jesus regards the sinner as the kind

and skilful physician does the sick patient. Who ever complained of a physician because he healed his patient, irrespective of the state and condition of his physical system? False doctrine would allow the doctor to be very free with his medicine, and bestow it most liberally, on condition that his patient should first become convalescent. And it would most graciously excuse the Saviour of mankind, should he manifest compassion to such as should recover themselves from a sinful to a holy condition. But to go directly to a sinner, and save him from being a sinner, is saving him irrespective of moral character, and is therefore wrong! Did the Lord Jesus effect the conversion of Saul irrespective of his moral character? The whole subject is seen in this simple question: Was Saul fit to become a Christian? Is a sinner fit to be saved from sin? Is a sick person fit to be cured? Is a blind man fit to have his eyes opened? Are such as are dead in sin fit to be quickened into a life of holiness? We must put such questions as these to our opposers in order to open their eyes; in order to turn them from darkness to light; from the power of Satan

unto God. If we should ask a person who was about to wash a garment, whether so filthy a garment was fit to be cleansed, would the question indicate good sense? See Rev. i. 5: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Did Jesus love us when we were sinners? Were we fit, when sinners, to be washed from our sins? Were we washed from our sins irrespective of our moral character?

If we can succeed in persuading the opposers of Universalism to consider, with a suitable degree of candor, the queries and suggestions which are here presented, a hope is entertained that some good may be the result; and that we shall hear less said against the salvation of sinners, because the doctrine is licentious.

Many of our Unitarian brethren have lately manifested a disposition to show some favor to Universalism, if it be so modified as to teach the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments. This they contend is indispensable; and that it is licentious not to believe it. Now we desire to reason with these brethren on this subject, and endeavor to show them the impropriety of

the position they have taken. We ask, in the first place, what they mean by rewards and punishments in a future state? Do they mean that righteousness, in this life, is to be recompensed in a future state? If so, when will the righteousness of that future state be recompensed? If the righteousness of this state is not recompensed here, why will the righteousness of the future state be recompensed there? According to such a theory, recompense will forever be one state of existence in arrear. The same argument will hold good in regard to punishment. If the wickedness of this state is to be punished in the future state, where will the wickedness of the future state be punished? Punishment must forever remain one state of man's existence in arrear. Contrary to this Unitarian theory, divine truth says: — "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." If our brethren were not most astonishingly blind, they would see that to teach that wickedness is not fully punished in this world, is the most licentious doctrine ever invented; and is, in the very nature of things, the

only deception which leads into sin. Who in all the world ever committed a sin with an expectation of gaining any happiness thereby in a future state; or who did not hope, not only to gain something desirable here, but to avoid the punishment of his wrong? If wickedness does not sufficiently punish the transgressor, what is there which is so much worse than wickedness that can do it? And if righteousness does not sufficiently reward the well doer, what is there so much better than righteousness that can do this?

Notwithstanding these arguments, if our brethren will show us a "thus saith the Lord," to prove that sin and misery will exist in a future state, we pledge our sincerity to subscribe to its truth.

HUMAN ABILITY

IN RELATION TO

GOSPEL SALVATION.

Under the above caption, we propose to submit to our readers a concise analysis of what we suppose is generally meant by free-agency, moral agency, or free will, as it regards what is meant in Scripture by salvation. This statement will, doubtless, bring to the reader's mind the great question on which the Christian church has, for many ages, been divided; and raise the question in his mind, whether the writer is vain enough to attempt to settle a controversy, which all the learning of the schools has, after ages of profound endeavor, been compelled to suffer to continue? In reply to this question, we would say, our present purpose is to present the subject in such a shape or phasis as to make it more simple, and more easy of understanding, than learned theolo-

gians have usually done; so that the free use of common sense, aided by undoubted Scripture authority, may come at a safe and satisfactory conclusion.

Let us, in the first place, fix our minds on a few points about which no different opinions are entertained.

1st. In respect to the character of our Heavenly Father. All will agree in ascribing to him all moral perfections, such as wisdom, knowledge, power, justice, mercy, and goodness; and will also agree in the belief that all these attributes harmonize in infinite love. We do not believe that any sensible reader will ask us to labor to prove this.

2d. We shall take it for granted, that all Christian people are agreed in the belief, that whatever is true in relation to man's salvation was embraced in the divine purpose, even before man was formed of the dust of the ground.

3d. We shall also take it for granted, that the divine perfections, in their very nature, preclude the possibility that God should purpose anything, and leave it uncertain; or that he should create

anything for a purpose which it may fail to accomplish.

Taking it for granted that these particulars will be considered as self-evident facts, we shall feel safe in our reasoning while we keep our arguments clearly consistent with them; and equally secure in rejecting anything which disagrees with any of them.

Our next inquiry will seek to ascertain what the Bible means by salvation. The Christian church has for ages been in the dark respecting this question. The necessity and nature of salvation are set forth in the creed of the church by the following questions and answers: "*Question.* What estate did the fall bring mankind into? *Answer.* All mankind, by the fall, lost communion with God, fell under his wrath and curse, were made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. *Question.* Did God leave all mankind to perish in this state of sin and misery? *Answer.* God, from all eternity, out of his mere good will and pleasure, elected some to everlasting life; and did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver

them out of a state of sin and misery, into a state of salvation, by a Redeemer." There are three modes of expressing what is meant by salvation, according to the above questions and answers. 1st. Salvation from divine wrath. 2d. Salvation from the everlasting pains of hell beyond death. 3d. Salvation from the just punishment of sin. We need not spend time to show that these three modes agree in one. The wrath of God, under which men fell, was the pains of hell forever, and these everlasting pains were the just punishment of sin. In relation to this scheme, a few suggestions may be useful. It seems quite unreasonable that God should be the author of any means whereby his creatures should be saved from his own wrath; and it is also disproved by the testimony of Jesus, in which he assures us that it was pursuant to God's love to the world that he was sent to save it. It would be difficult to state anything more unreasonable than to say that God so loved sinners that he sent his beloved Son to save them from his own wrath! It seems just, also, to remark, that, as all our doctors who believe in the existence of the hell which they have held up to

the people, believe that God designed it for the endless punishment of sinners, they are quite unreasonable in supposing that He has devised means to prevent the accomplishment of this purpose! To these remarks we may add, that our doctors have been quite as unreasonable in contending, as they have done, that God will render unto every man according to his works, and will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, when, at the same time, they have no other salvation to preach to the people than salvation from the punishment of their sins.

When we consider the unreasonableness of the scheme of salvation as has been held in the church, and when we come to learn that there is not an intimation in all the Scriptures of any such salvation, we may marvel at the blindness and total ignorance of the doctors of the church respecting this vast and all-important subject. But, when we understand their errors, we need not wonder at the innumerable inventions, arts, and contrivances, to which the schools have been driven; and the endless jargons which we meet with in what are called bodies of divinity.

On the subject of Gospel Salvation, the Scriptures are as clear and definite as is required in order to be understood by even the unlearned, allowing they can barely read them. The Scriptures teach a salvation from a condition which the people were in; not from a condition which they were in danger of being in, in a future state; not from the punishment of sin, but from sin itself. Jesus came to save his people from their sins. He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. He came to seek and to save that which *was* lost; not that which was not already lost. Paul says: "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them who *are* lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel, which is the image of God, should shine unto them." The salvation of sinners is represented by washing and by purifying. St. Paul says: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might wash it with the washing of water by the Word." Again, he says, "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and

purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In another place he sets forth salvation thus: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved,) and hath raised us up together; and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which

God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Such plain language cannot be misunderstood. Isaiah uses different representations of the same great subject, but equally easy to understand. See the following: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will give thee for a covenant of the people for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Here are the words of Malachi: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Of Jesus, John said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Hear the words of the redeemed: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood!" We quote one more form of expressing Gospel salvation: "And all things are of God,

who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Standing in the light of those Scriptures, all must understand what they mean by Gospel salvation. Although the question, whether this salvation is purposed by its divine Author for all men, is not now under consideration, we should always bear it in mind that, "God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;" and that he "worketh all things according to his own will."

We come now to consider the use of human ability in the work of Gospel salvation. And now we must bring our subject directly into the light of those particulars in which all are agreed,

which were noticed in the commencement of this article. The whole and the all of this great and universal salvation was embraced in the purpose of our Heavenly Father, before man was formed of the dust of the earth. And this purpose is in perfect agreement with all the adorable attributes of the Creator and Ruler of all worlds and beings. Our reason, thus assisted, sees clearly that our Heavenly Father must have provided all the means, all the powers, all the agencies, and appointed all the operations and exercises of all the powers and means by him provided and by him controlled, necessary to accomplish his whole purpose. Now, reader, if you will carefully examine the whole subject of Gospel salvation, as set forth in the Scriptures, you must understand that such a salvation requires the mental exercise of all the moral powers of man, as necessarily as it requires the action of the eye in order to see the light or to distinguish objects by it. But you must also as clearly see and understand, that the wisdom and power of God are just as much manifested in the former case as in the latter. God made the eye, and by it we see; God gave us our moral

powers, and by them we perceive; and by our perceptions of his character, we are drawn in love to him. This love constitutes salvation, and fills us with the divine nature.

In the view which we now have of our subject, we are enabled to realize the entire unconditionality of the divine appointments, and the infallible certainty of their accomplishment. If our Heavenly Father had revealed to us, as a fact, that he had given us powers which are not under his control, and whose operations he had not appointed, we should have had a very different subject to contemplate, and one which must have deprived us of all trust and confidence either in God or ourselves! But we rejoice that no such revelation is made.

It is argued by many, that our spiritual interests are as much committed to our agency as are our temporal concerns. And as we know, that if we do not sow and plant, and till the soil, we shall have no bread, so, if we do not obey the commandments of God, we can have no rational hope of salvation. Now, what does all this amount to? Does it not mean that God has not

made our spiritual interest secure, and that he has left it with us to decide the matter? Yes, this is the meaning of the argument. But, let us ask if God has left our temporal concerns on conditions which involve uncertainty? Is he not the maker of the earth and its fruitfulness? Is he not the maker of all our physical powers, and the author of all our wants, appetites, and desires? Has he not given us skill to labor, and by these means has he not made sure our sustenance? And when our provisions are on our tables, do we not, with much propriety, thank him for them, and for our strength by which they were procured, as well as for our appetites to receive them? All this must be granted. Where, then, is the uncertainty? Was it less certain, a thousand years ago, that the quantity of provisions raised this year in the United States, and in all the rest of the world, would be so raised, than it is now that it has been raised? And was it less certain, a thousand years ago, that all the labor which has been employed in producing this quantity of provisions would be so employed, than it is now that it has been? Was it less certain, a

thousand years ago, that all the mason-work now in the world would now be, than that it now is? Or was it less certain, a thousand years ago, that all the science and labor which have contributed to this vast work would be so employed, than it now is that it has been so employed? Was it less certain, a thousand years ago, that the twenty millions of people in the United States would enjoy all the blessings of independence and of a republican government now, than it is that they do now enjoy those blessings? And was it less certain, a thousand years ago, that the wars and revolutions, the political strifes and bitter animosities, which have led to the present state of our country, would take place, than it now is that they have taken place? Was it less certain, a thousand years ago, that all the genuine Christians who are now in the world would now be, than it now is that they are? And was it less true, a thousand years ago, that all the mental and moral exercises which have led to this pure, experimental Christianity, would result as they have, than that they have now so resulted? Is it an incomprehensible mystery, that God is the

Author of what his own works produce? Or can we reasonably doubt the exact fulfilment of all which God has purposed by all the works of his hands? "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to whom be glory, forever. Amen."

THE VALUE OF GOOD WORKS.

THERE has been much dispute in the church in regard to the estimation in which good works should be held. While, on the one hand, one class of Christian doctors have been accused of depending on good works for what the Scriptures call salvation, those doctors who urge this accusation have, in return, been accused of excluding good works as worthless. It is true, moreover, that the schools have found it extremely difficult so to define their respective positions in relation to the dispute, as to make it easy to understand what each in reality wishes to teach. Nothing is more common than to hear it stated from the pulpit that the divine favor can be granted only on condition of obeying the divine commands; and at the same time, and from the same lips, we hear it asserted that it is by free grace we are saved, and not by any works of righteousness wrought by

us. There are not a few who complain of their preachers for what seem to them contradictions in preaching; for although the learned preacher thinks he is able to understand these matters, he is not able to make his hearers understand them.

The design of this attempt is to present the reader with the true value of good works, and the place they occupy in the divine economy, in so plain and simple a manner, that all who read may understand.

The Scriptures are so explicit on this weighty and momentous subject, that we cannot read them without being surprised that learned theologians should ever have had any doubts or controversy on the subject. Some of those passages which were quoted to show the nature of what the Scriptures call salvation, in a former article, are here introduced again, for the purpose of bringing our present subject to the understanding of the reader. Eph. ii. 1—10: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh

in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that, in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." In this scripture the Apostle sets forth the moral condition from which he and his Christian brethren had obtained salvation, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. He carefully sets forth the fact, that God had effected this salvation on account of the great love wherewith he loved

them while they were dead in sins, and of course, not on account of any works by them performed. Here, then, it is plainly seen, that God's saving grace is not granted to us on condition of our good works. But, if the reader will be careful to understand the Apostle's argument, he will clearly see that the good works of the saved are the natural fruits of their salvation. Carefully notice the Apostle's words: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Here we see things in their natural order. Cause is not put for effect; nor is effect put for cause. We see here, that God so highly esteems good works, that he takes sinners who are dead in sins, and quickens them into spiritual life; and gives them a new creation in Christ Jesus, by which they are enabled to do those good works which he so highly esteems, and in which he fore-ordained they should walk. If we are cautious, as we ought to be, we shall understand that our good works were not required as conditions of the divine favor; for that favor was bestowed on us while we were dead in sins.

And we shall moreover see, that God so highly prizes good works, that he is at the expense of creating us in Christ Jesus, that we may be enabled to be fruitful in them. Let no one object to the word *expense* here used, for it cost the dire sufferings, blood, and death of the Mediator between God and men, to effect the work of our redemption from sin.

In his epistle to Titus, 2d chapter, verse 14th, the Apostle says, "Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." In this passage, we have the same doctrine as we found in the one quoted from Ephesians. The true value of good works is set forth in the clearest light. Why did Jesus give himself for us? Answer. That he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Reader, do you not see that these good works are the fruits of our redemption from all iniquity, and of our purification? And do you not also see, that it would be a most unreasonable perversion of the text to say, that these good works are the con-

ditions on which our redemption from all iniquity is granted?

The reader will now see, that, if divines have erred in their estimation of the real value of good works, it is not because they prized them too lightly; but because they have placed them where they do not belong in the economy of divine wisdom. If Jesus gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, surely he must hold good works in as high esteem as we can well imagine. But surely he would not teach us that our good works were conditions on which our redemption and purification from sin and moral death were bestowed; for these were granted pursuant to that great love wherewith God loved us while we were dead in sins; and were wrought for us to enable us to bring forth the desirable fruits of good works, agreeably to the divine ordination.

In order further to illustrate our subject, we may notice again the following words: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained,

that we should walk in them." There appears no more difficulty in understanding the sense of these words, than there is in understanding what we may take from the physical economy as an illustration. It will be admitted, on all hands, that God fore-ordained that we should labor to procure our temporal subsistence; and it will also be granted, that the Creator bestowed on us faculties of both mind and body, suited to the end of performing this labor. Now let us ask, whether it is reasonable to pretend that these faculties of mind and body were bestowed on us as a reward of this labor? Or that this labor was required as a condition on which these faculties of body and mind were bestowed on us?

One great object for which Jesus gave himself for us was, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. A people zealous of good works is a *peculiar* people. Let professed Christians always keep this in mind. To be zealous about religious creeds, about religious rites and ceremonies, about worldly honors and riches, about distinctions in this world, and even in the

world to come, is nothing *peculiar*. But, to be zealous of good works, is *very peculiar!* That the Christian may be thus peculiar, let him take heed to the precepts of the Divine Master. "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

ADVICE TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

Having, by the favor of Divine Providence, lived to an advanced age, and having spent many years in ministering to my fellow-creatures the divine doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, with fervent desires to assist in the work of removing doctrinal errors, which have long obscured the light of the Gospel, and dishonored the adorable character of our Heavenly Father; and having all the time been persuaded, that a better knowledge of divine truth would certainly effect a desirable reformation in the morals of community, the writer of the following advice feels it his duty to leave behind him, when he shall be called away by the Divine Master, a few suggestions to young people, for the purpose of showing them some of those duties which genuine Christianity requires of them.

Dear youth, if you have been favored with the

right kind of religious instruction, you have been taught to view our Creator as your Heavenly Father, and to realize your moral obligations to love and serve him by yielding obedience to all his requirements. Now, that you should thus conduct yourselves, you will see by understanding the reasonableness of the divine precepts, and their adaptation to your own interests. Our Heavenly Father is not dependent on his creatures for anything; the services and duties, therefore, which he requires of us, are all designed for our good, and are imposed on us by those favors we have already received, and are clearly pointed out to us by the favorable circumstances in which we are placed. These remarks are designed to induce you to look about you, and to consider what favors you have received of our Creator, and what are the circumstances and relations in which you find yourselves.

Consider, first of all, the physical and moral constitutions conferred on you by the Creator. All your senses, all your faculties, both of body and mind, are the bestowments of the Creator. These all demand your gratitude. Be grateful,

therefore, continually; and duly consider that gratitude is one of our sweetest enjoyments. Not only do our faculties of mind and body demand our gratitude to the Creator, but they point out to us the use for which they were given. Seriously consider, then, what use is required of every sense and faculty of which you are possessed. This consideration will constantly admonish you of your duty, and against any forbidden use of your abilities. Learn to read yourselves, and contemplate the wisdom and goodness of God, which the moral and physical constitutions given you by him are calculated to teach, and you will find that the pages of this divine work are full of most useful instruction.

Your family relations make important and powerful demands on your most devoted services. Next to your Maker, he has placed your parents and family connections. "Honor thy father and thy mother," is a divine command, obedience to which constitutes the brightest gem in the character of sons and daughters. As you cannot fully estimate the pleasure you give your parents by treating them as filial duty requires, so are you

unable duly to comprehend the mental pain they endure when improperly treated by their offspring. When you are in their presence, listen to their counsels, and give heed to their admonitions; and when absent from them, keep them in your minds, and be careful to do nothing which you are sensible they would disapprove. Are they sick? Watch over them. Are they needy? Administer liberally to their necessities; and remember them in your prayers to your Father in heaven. Children who are not neglectful of their duties to their parents, will, of necessity, keep themselves from all improper or unlawful indulgences; for nothing is more unkind to parents than blots of vice on the characters of the children they love. Could sons and daughters properly consider these matters, how pure would they keep themselves, for their parents' sake as well as their own! If you would be approved of Heaven, if you would do your duty to your parents, if you would secure peace and enjoyment in the family circle, be kind and loving to your brothers and sisters. The variegated beauties of a garden of flowers are not more charming than are urban-

ity and loving-kindness among brothers and sisters of the same domestic circle.

Our religion, beloved youth, teaches us that the same moral principles which ought to have their permanent home in all our hearts, and which point out the duties of children to their parents, and to each other, if duly regarded, will direct you how to discharge all your duties to community at large. If you properly consider your relation to society, you will soon acquaint yourselves with those obligations which are necessarily imposed on you by such relation. And here, again, opens to your view the delightful field of your labor in doing good to all around you to the utmost of all your means. Humanity is one great family; for our Heavenly Father "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" and has revealed himself in one Mediator, as the Father and benefactor of all. This great fundamental truth you have already been taught by the Holy Scriptures, by the minister on whose preaching you have attended, by your pious parents, and in your Sabbath schools. Your aged and affectionate adviser

would call your attention to your duties, which the religion you have been taught requires. As every element of material nature is the common undivided inheritance of the whole human family, so are all the divine riches of that wisdom and love which God has revealed in his beloved Son, our common Lord and Saviour. That your virtues may correspond with the religion you have been taught, you will perceive that your benevolence must be universal, your love impartial, and without dissimulation.

For many ages, young people have been so educated as to consider religion and its duties as unsuitable to their age, and of a nature which is incompatible with their enjoyments. The reason of this injurious mistake was the opinion that virtue was estimable on account of the reward it merited in a future state; and that wickedness and vice yielded desirable pleasures in this world, but exposed the sinner to unmerciful punishment hereafter, unless repented of before death. Accordingly, young people shunned religion and the blessed precepts it requires, and sought happiness where it was never found. Thank God, that in-

jurious doctrine is passing away; and young and old are opening their eyes to the truth that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" and that the "way of the transgressor is hard." Many eyes are now opened to see that our Creator has inseparably united our duty, in all the relations of life, with our enjoyment; and has wisely ordained that every transgression and disobedience should receive a just recompense in the state in which they are practised. These divine truths, understood, and kept constantly in mind, will naturally draw you away from unlawful indulgences, from impious practices, and irreligious habits.

In regard to religion and its duties, you are advised to learn to distinguish between the true and the false; between outward rites and vital principles; between superstition and a sound understanding. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," at all times, as an object of constant love and devotion, whose true worship is in spirit and truth, in filial love and obedience. As to outward forms, they justly claim your attention, so far as reasonable customs demand. Attendance

on the services of the sanctuary on the Sabbath cannot, with propriety, be omitted, without some reasonable excuse. And you are most affectionately advised to unite with older Christians in celebrating the Lord's Supper, as well as in the rest of the services of the sanctuary. If you do these things, and walk worthy of them, you will find rich blessings in so doing.

Though you are young, it is your duty to make yourselves acquainted with the principles of your country's government and laws, and by all means submit to all their requirements, as good citizens.

You scarcely need to be advised in regard to your education; in relation to the acquisition of scientific knowledge, and an acquaintance with the useful arts. Such are the facilities which are now enjoyed for improvement in these useful things, and so well is their necessity understood, that you scarcely need to be advised on the subject, more than on that of the use of food for the body.

Doubtless, youth need advice to avoid that morbid habit which now prevails, of reading novels and exciting stories night and day, to such excess

as to weaken both mind and body, to the neglect of the duties of life. Such habits serve to unsettle the mind, and fix the fancy on unrealities; and deprive you of substantial realities and solid enjoyments. Read and study your Bibles; read and acquaint yourselves with approved histories.

There is one subject more which your adviser cannot persuade himself to omit; and yet, though it be of vast moment, it is of such a delicate nature as to render it dangerous to approach it. Beloved youth, consider! reflect! It may be presumed that you anticipate the subject. You are right. It is no less than the relation, the sacred relation, of "male and female," which the Creator has constituted. If you duly consider the purposes of divine wisdom in this most sacred relation, you must be sensible that any *forbidden* indulgences in this relation must be attended with evils corresponding with their odious character. Do you ask when these evils will be felt and suffered? Be assured they must be experienced as bitter weeds, as briars and thorns, in that domestic garden, which the purity of honor and virtue would have rendered a blooming and fruitful paradise.

SALVATION BY GRACE.

Under this head, I find a brother has referred to what I said in my remarks on one of the resolutions published in the "Trumpet" some weeks ago, and which were passed by "The Merrimac River Universalist Ministerial Association." My remarks were published in the "Trumpet" of October 20th, and my brother's notice of them is in the "Freeman" of November 16th. He says that my notice of the article is "not wholly approbative." Now as but few of the readers of the "Freeman" may have seen my remarks on those resolutions, I have a desire that the readers of that paper should have an opportunity to read what I offered on the one noticed by my brother. The resolution reads as follows: —

"That it is inexpedient and practically unprofitable to teach that the exercise of man's moral agency is to have no part in the attainment of salvation."

On this resolution I offered the following notice: —

"Here we are presented with a certain something, expressed by two words, neither of which is found in the Scriptures, 'moral agency.' What is it? It is supposed to be something that belongs to man, which is exercised in man's salvation. Is it something which the Creator has made and given to man as an essential part of his being? If so, was it designed by its Author to perform a certain part of man's salvation? If so, it will certainly do it, if divine wisdom has made no mistake! Is it something which is included in the following words of St. Paul, recorded in Eph. ii. 8—10? 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' Is this moral agency also embraced in the following passage? Phil. ii. 12, 13. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of

his good pleasure.' These passages plainly show, that what the Scriptures mean by salvation is effected pursuant to the divine purpose, and by a divine influence in the mind or understanding of man, rendering the will devoted to the service of God, as expressed by the converted Saul, who said, — 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' If what is meant by man's moral agency, as expressed in the resolution, is comprehended in those passages above cited, was it ever known that our ministry disallowed it? Our ministry has heretofore, and it is hoped that it will continue to disallow any power in man to prevent a work which God, in mercy, has purposed to effect by his grace." This is all which I offered in my notice of the resolution under consideration.

I have no inclination to find fault with my brother, but I do regret that he made any reference to what I wrote without taking the least notice of the important queries by me stated. I cited two passages, which speak of our salvation, and asked whether what brethren meant by moral agency was comprehended in them. Then I asked, if what they meant by moral agency was set forth

or included in those Scriptures, whether it was ever known that our ministry ever denied it? I presume no one will deny that the resolution signified that our ministry had been in fault, by teaching what the resolution deems to be inexpedient and practically unprofitable. I asked whether this moral agency was something which God constituted in man, as part of his being; and if so, was it designed by the Creator to perform any part of man's salvation? And I moreover added, that if God had created this moral agency for this purpose, it would certainly answer that purpose, if divine wisdom had made no mistake! This last remark was designed to show, what it does most evidently show, viz., that what theologians have meant by moral agency, or free agency, is in fact a mere chimera. What they have meant by it is, an ability which it is possible for man to exercise, in a way to prevent a work of divine grace, which our Heavenly Father is disposed to accomplish in our salvation. If our Heavenly Father has given us faculties for certain purposes, to say that they will prevent his own designs, or that such a thing is possible, is to deny

the perfection of his works. If brethren believe in such an agency, they should say so plainly. If they do not believe in such an agency, what necessity was there for the resolution under consideration? If they will tell me that they mean nothing more by human agency than those abilities or faculties which God has given us, and which are so under his control that he can and does, by the means which he has appointed, illuminate and deliver from moral darkness, and fill them all with divine love, so that the whole man becomes active in all duties which divine love requires, I will find no fault if they choose to name such faculties *moral agency*, though I see no propriety in the use of the terms.

My brother proposes the following question: "We want to know simply, whether the work of salvation — the freedom of the soul from sin — is done exclusively through the instrumentality of God's grace; or whether the instrumentality of man's moral action comes in and assists the work?" After stating this question, he adds,— "Now this, I apprehend, is a plain question. It does not require any learned essay in metaphysics

to solve it. Every one can understand it, as easily as he can the question whether the harvests of our fields are enjoyed by us as the free gifts of God, coming to us through the instrumentality of divine agency, without any effort of ours, or whether they come through the divine instrumentality, and yet our agency acts in coöperation therewith? This is not an abstruse question. It is one that can be answered to the satisfaction of all. We know that our harvests do not come, exclusively, from the divine agency, but that the efforts of man are in requisition, without which we do not reap. Here we know the divine and human agencies coöperate. God gives us the rich soil, the early and the latter rains, the genial sunshine, and all other influences suited to produce the crop; and yet the harvests will not be reaped, unless we sow the seed, till the soil, and protect the field against the ravages of the spoiler."

By these remarks, it seems that our brother thinks he has made the subject all plain, and decided the whole matter. But as for myself, I cannot understand him, if he has not left the sub-

ject all in confusion. What does he mean by divine instrumentality? What does he mean by the instrumentality of man's moral action? If he does not mean to speak of two distinct instrumentalities, I know not what he means. But if he does mean this, can he mean that one mind directs all the means, called instrumentalities; or are there two minds, one for each instrumentality? Does he mean that God, intending to free the soul from sin, puts in motion such instrumentalities as are necessary to do all which belongs to him to do in the work, knowing, at the same time, that unless the sinner puts in operation other instrumentalities for the same purpose, and thus coöperates with him in the work, all he does will be useless? With entire ease can sinners render the whole scheme of gospel salvation null and void. They have only to fold their arms, lie still, and do nothing!

> Thus men, inert, remain supine,
> And render void the scheme divine!

Who can believe he means all this? And yet who can deny that he not only means all this, but even thinks he has proved it? Has he not shown

us, that God, our kind providential Father, has, for the benevolent purpose of feeding us, his children, put in operation various instrumentalities, such as a rich soil, genial sunshine and rains, and other influences, as far as is proper for him to provide, knowing, at the same time, that all these instrumentalities would fail entirely of the end designed, if we, his children, did not put in operation other instrumentalities, and thereby coöperate with him in the good work? Was ever anything more clearly shown! Be careful, reader; if our brother does not mean to prove that it is possible for man to refuse to coöperate with the divine agency, but means that the divine agency has secured the operation of all the agency which he calls man's agency, then he certainly involves all the instrumentalities, of which he speaks, under the control of the divine agency. And now look at matters in the light of common sense. Is not God as evidently the author of all our powers of mind and body, of all our necessities and wants, and even our willingness to exert ourselves to use all the means he has given us to relieve our wants, as he is of the rich soil, the genial sunshine, and

the early and latter rains? Now if all this must be granted, where shall we find that agency of man which is not under the divine control?

I notice one thing more, in what our brother has written, and I do it to show that he has fully conceded all which he meant to argue against. "We are not passive receivers of a foreign good. We are not simply the depositories of what God gives us; but we are put in motion, so to speak, and so far as we are benefited or saved by grace, we shall manifest the Christian fruits in holy lives." Notice, reader, "*we are put in motion.*" What puts us in motion? Answer, saving grace. Now I ask, who in all the world doubts it? The whole of this labored subject is comprehended in one short sentence. "We love him, because he first loved us."

NECESSITY AND FREE-WILL.

In the "Universalist Quarterly" for January, 1846, is presented to the public an essay on Divine and human agency, which treats on the subject of necessity and free-will, in which, as St. Peter said of the Epistles of St. Paul, are "some things which are hard to be understood." On page 26, we find the following: —

> The doctrine of necessity, then, appears not to cover the whole ground, at least in any form in which it has hitherto been defined. Though it be true as far as it goes, there are principles and modes of power it does not embrace. Man is not only acted upon by causes within and without, but, in some mysterious way, he does, at the same time, really act from himself, even distinct from the action of God, in the same sense that his personality is distinct from the personality of God. In both cases the sense must indeed be a limited one; but who shall tell us where the boundary lies?"

It is really difficult to understand what the writer meant by what is here quoted. The doctrine of necessity is allowed to a certain limited extent; man is acted upon by causes within and without; and these actions are allowed to be the actions of God, if the writer be understood; and the actions of those causes which are within the man, and without the man, and are allowed to be the actions of God, are exerted on the man at the same time that he acts from himself distinct from them, which he performs by means of "principles and modes of power" which are not embraced in the doctrine of necessity. Who can understand this? Does man possess principles and modes of power which his Maker is not the author of? If God is the author of all the principles and modes of power which are in man, does not man necessarily possess them? If so, then the doctrine of necessity does cover the ground on which they are established.

What the writer means by these principles and modes of power is difficult to understand. It seems they are distinct from those causes which act upon man, and are within and without.

Neither man's wants, nor his desires, which are within, and are ever active in him, are allowed to belong to these principles and modes of power; and yet it is evident that, without these wants and desires, man would never act.

Though it is in vain to seek to know what is meant by these principles and modes of power, we may, for sake of further inquiry, allow their existence, and ask whether we are taught by the Scriptures, philosophy, metaphysics, or experience, that we do, in reality, exercise any such principles and modes of power distinct from the causes within and without, which constantly act upon us, and do this at the same time those causes are acting upon us? We further ask, if the Creator has given to man principles and modes of power, did he not purpose whatever results from them? and did he not know that such purpose would be accomplished? If all this must be allowed, as it evidently must be, what has the writer gained, by all he has said, in favor of free agency as distinct from the doctrine of necessity? If nothing, then necessity covers the whole ground of the subject; and this he must

allow, if he admits that what God purposed in giving to man the principles and modes of power, of which he speaks, will be accomplished.

But our writer will here say, that we run into Pantheism. See the page before the one from which we have quoted, where he says, —

"Were we to take the doctrine of necessity as adequately expressing all there is in the case, and stop at the conclusion that every volition of ours, every movement of our minds, every act, is but a fixed link in the chain of causes and effects which run forth from God and constitute the universe, — let this be regarded as the *whole* of the matter, and we are brought to Pantheism at once. In this case, God is the sole agent, moral, intellectual, and physical. He does all the willing, he does all the thinking, through us; he makes our characters for us, does our labor in the field and workshop, loves for us and hates for us, eats our dinners for us, perpetrates our crimes for us. Or, rather, he, being the sole agent, the only life of the whole, we do not exist as persons, but merely as integral parts of him; and it is he alone who acts in us, literally, his members."

If what is here stated be correct and true, is not Pantheism, to the full extent of the creation of the universe, as it exists *necessarily*, also true?

If God has made any creatures which, through their whole existence, are wholly governed by fixed laws, does not our writer contend that all such creatures are but integral parts of himself? Or can our writer, or any one else, believe that all the animals, all the birds, all the reptiles and insects, together with all the fish in the sea, possess those principles and modes of power which he assigns to man? If he does not believe this, he must allow that all these creatures are but integral parts of God; and, to be consistent, he must allow that all which we say those creatures do, God does for them.

Our writer, no doubt, expected his readers would be disgusted at the doctrine of necessity, when they saw that, according to that doctrine, "God does all our willing, all our thinking; makes our characters for us, does our labor in the field and workshop, loves for us, and hates for us, eats our dinners for us, perpetrates our crimes for us," &c. But would it seem much more agreeable to the reader to say, that, from a little calf, God grows for him to an ox; draws for him his nourishment from the cow, runs about

the pasture for him, and for him eats grass; and also draws the plough in the field for him? And could we increase the reader's pleasure by running through all the actions of the various animals, birds, reptiles, insects, and fishes, pointing out and showing that God performs all their actions for them, and that they are but integral parts of him? Why, let us ask, does it prove that men are but integral parts of God because they act from fixed laws, and act wholly so, any more than it proves that all other creatures are such because they so act?

Following our first quotation, our writer says,—

"It may be said that we are now following the subject into mystery. Well do we know this. There is mystery all around us, from the spire of grass that grows beneath our feet, up to the secrets of the invisible world; and are we greatly astonished to find it here? Before we explain the ultimate grounds of the human will, it might be instructive to try our skill at explaining the mysterious power of vegetable life in yonder flower."

In this way, all scruples as to the truth of what the writer has asserted, which is neither proved nor understood, are removed. And this

is precisely the way by which Trinitarians set all doubts aside in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. Because we are unable to explain the laws, powers, and process of vegetation, the doctrine of the Trinity is true! Although we cannot explain the laws of vegetation, we do not doubt that the Creator is the author of those laws, and the cause of the growth and perfection of every flower that comes to maturity. But must we then say that God grows for the flower, buds for the flower, blooms for it, sheds its fragrance for it, lives a little while for it, and then dies for it, because it is an integral part of him?

If what is here presented to the reader should give any assistance in arriving at a satisfactory conclusion respecting the subject considered, the design of the writer will be answered; if not, he will enjoy some satisfaction in a consciousness of having done what he believes a duty. On several accounts, it was with even painful reluctance that he has done it. 1st. Because he is deeply sensible of his very limited ability to do justice to any difficult subject, which, added to the consideration of his age and infirmities, ad-

monishes him of his liability to misunderstand arguments to which he would reply. 2d. Because the author of what has been called in question is a brother, and a justly and highly esteemed laborer in the ministry of our common faith; esteemed and beloved by our whole fraternity, and especially by him who has here called his arguments in question.

THE RIGHT MOTIVE.

To induce men to action, whether mental or physical, it seems to be necessary that some specific motive should be presented, in which is seen something interesting as available in procuring enjoyment. Such a motive is required in all sorts of pursuits, whether of a temporal or of a religious nature.

In agreement with the principle above stated, we shall find all the duties which the Scriptures enjoin on men are presented to our minds; and if religious teachers have sometimes erred, in regard to right motives, they have depended on the correctness of our principle, though the motive was incorrect.

It has been the general practice of the Christian clergy, for a long time, to endeavor to persuade people to seek God, to seek religion, to repent of their sins and live a Christian life, by urging, as a paramount motive thereto, two

important considerations. On the one hand, an eternity of happiness in an immortal state; and, on the other, an endless duration of woe in the future world. The first to be obtained, and the last to be shunned, by a compliance with the duties enjoined. These future states of bliss and woe have been ample subjects for preachers to dwell on in their pulpit labors, and have furnished unbounded fields for the range of imagination and the employment of all the powers of oratory. On the one hand, every possible description of felicity has been presented; and, on the other, all the powers of language have been employed in describing the terrors of that woe which awaits the delinquent. On this kind of preaching great dependence has been placed, for the purpose of leading sinners to repentance, and to a compliance with what was called the terms of salvation. On such preaching, too, reliance was placed to produce and carry on what have been called revivals of religion, whereby our churches have been abundantly supplied with converts.

Although we would charitably believe that preachers who have been employed in the way

just described were fully persuaded they were in the path of duty, — and that the more inviting they represented that blissful state which they promised the obedient, and the more horrible they described the state of woe which awaits all who neglect the offers of grace, the better they performed their duty, both to God and their fellowmen, — we do not find, in the Scriptures, an example which they have followed.

We deem it safe to say, that what is meant by true religion is embraced in that wisdom which is spoken of in Prov. iii. 13—18. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand, riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her." In this recommendation of wisdom, we see that it is the

happiness she yields to every one who lays hold upon her and retaineth her, which is presented as the right motive to induce men to seek such a treasure. Let us here ask if it would not present wisdom in a very different light, should we propose anything else as a recompense for our possessing her? By making such a proposal should we not signify that what we offered as a recompense was not only something besides wisdom, but something better? Now, if we are right in supposing that true religion, the religion of Christianity, is comprehended in that wisdom above described, do we do this religion justice by offering something besides itself as a recompense for possessing it? And, in agreement with these suggestions, we observe that, in the scripture above quoted, there is no allusion to a state of immortal bliss as a reward for obtaining wisdom; nor is there any description of an eternity of woe which may be avoided by possessing the recommended treasure.

In the sermon which Jesus delivered on the mount, in which he presented all the blessed virtues of his religion, and those precepts which

constitute those virtues, the bliss produced by them are all placed in the present tense. Nothing do we here find which serves as an example faithfully imitated by our clergy, who come to their congregations with a description of a state of immortal happiness hereafter as a reward of duty done here; and a most vivid account of the torments of a state of endless sufferings as a just retribution for a neglect of duty in this life. Is it an unreasonable question to ask, why our Christian ministers should so far depart from the teachings of the Divine Master, and set up arguments, and present motives, for which Jesus never set an example?

In that wonderful speech which Peter delivered on the day of Pentecost, — in which he preached to the murderers of Jesus the blessed Gospel of his risen Master, which proved effectual in the conversion of three thousand souls, — we find not a single word of threatening the people with endless woe if they refused to repent; nor a word of promise of an immortal state of bliss if they did. Will not candor allow that the facts here presented are a cogent rebuke of such preaching as has been popular in our times?

In the account of the conversion of Saul, the persecutor, recorded in the 9th of Acts, we are informed concerning the means of this work of divine grace. The Lord Jesus asked this exceedingly mad persecutor the following question: "Why persecutest thou me?" Saul asked: "Who art thou, Lord?" Jesus answered: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." The subdued persecutor said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Surely, we find here no example of such preaching as has been in use to lead sinners to repentance in our days. Saul was not informed that he was in danger of the awful doom of endless woe, and that, unless he repented, that doom would surely be his portion. Nor did Jesus inform him of a state of endless bliss as a reward for becoming a Christian.

In the discourse delivered by Peter to Cornelius and his friends, which God blessed to the conversion of these Gentiles, we find nothing of this bargain which modern preaching offers to sinners; nothing about a hereafter reward for repentance, and faith in Christ; nothing about

the awful doom of endless woe if the offer be not accepted.

To what has been said we may add the fact that, in all the accounts we have of the preaching of the apostles, we find no such conditions or offers made to either Jews or Gentiles, to influence men or women to become Christians. A belief in that life and immortality which are brought to light through the Gospel is evidently the Christian faith; which faith, being productive of that hope which is an anchor of the soul, entering into that within the vale whither the Forerunner is for us entered, works by love, and brings the soul into the enjoyment of that righteousness which constitutes the kingdom of God. In the light of this truth we see that true religion is the righteousness which the blessed hunger and thirst for, according to the words of Jesus, who said, — "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." How unreasonable, then, is it to represent true religion as a condition on which a blessed state is granted, as if this blessed state was something distinct from true religion! Such a mistake robs

Divine righteousness of its intrinsic worth. Those who commit the error say, if there be no reward hereafter for living righteously here, it is folly to live a righteous life, and forego the pleasures of sin.

What we desire, by these arguments, is to have people understand and realize the blessed doctrine expressed in the nineteenth psalm. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

PROGRESSION.

The Christian ministry, in these times, seems to be much occupied on the subject of progress. The old schemes which clerical wisdom contrived, to maintain an eternal distinction in the condition of the human family, have, in a great measure, become obsolete. That our Creator should predestinate a large part of the human race to endure endless woe for their wrong-doings in this mortal state, and grant to the rest a gracious pardon of all their sins, and a state of endless felicity, as has been long believed and preached, does not now so well please the people as formerly. There are a great many objections to that creed, and they are of such a magnitude, and so apparent to common sense, that the clergy are generally cautious not to offend the good sense of their hearers by presenting that worn-out Calvinism to them. Nor does the Arminian scheme, in the form and dress in which it has

long been held, so entirely satisfy people as it formerly did. It eventuated in maintaining as wide a distinction in the eternal state of mankind, as did the scheme of Calvin; but did not seem to involve the Divine character quite so apparently. The most essential fault in those old doctrines, as they now appear to people in this age, is the *extreme* difference which they make in the final condition of mankind.

Now it is evident that, on account of a proneness in mankind to what may be called, in the common acceptation of the word, *selfishness*, people have heretofore believed in doctrines which teach that some will be better off in eternity than others; for instances have been rare in which it has appeared that they who believed those doctrines did not believe that their own eternal state would be all which they could desire. This selfishness, which is undoubtedly an imperfection, is a certain something which adheres more closely to people than any doctrine which they may imbibe; and will be about the last imperfection which the human heart will part with. There are no doctrinal dogmas, however perti-

naciously adhered to, which may not be more easily surrendered than this inherent *selfishness*, which seems to have been the origin of all partial doctrines. If this selfishness be deprived of one scheme of partiality, on which it has nourished itself, it will immediately invent another; and so long as its wisdom rules the mind, the wisdom which is from above, which is without partiality, will be rejected.

Having those things of which we have spoken in view, we may ask the simple question, to which wisdom does this doctrine of *progression* belong? Does it belong to that wisdom which is from above, which is without partiality, or does it belong to the wisdom which is from beneath?

The advocate for the doctrine of progression will, undoubtedly, answer, from above, be sure, for to progress in wisdom, in knowledge, in holiness, and all that is godly, must be right in the sight of God, and ought to be approved of all men. But we have another question to ask. What motive or object have we in view, which prompts us to make this progress? The honest answer is, that we may occupy higher stations in

the future eternal world than those who are here indolent and sinful; and, moreover, that we may enter on the future state in advance of others, who here neglect to make the progress which we do. Shall we be told that this is not the way in which those talk who preach the doctrine of progression? But do they not hold out such inducements to their hearers? This will not be denied. The subject, then, is all plain; and it amounts to an eternal distinction in the condition of mankind, certainly not less flattering to human pride than any other partial system by selfish man invented. What will finally be the amount of true godliness to which such progression will attain may remain doubtful at least; and how well it may compare with the character of Jesus may be questionable. See Matt. xx. 27, 28, "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The real character and spirit of a righteousness acquired for the purpose of the eternal distinctions which constitute the object of the prog-

ress, which has been considered, are, doubtless, the same as were the character and spirit of the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, who thanked God that they were not like other men; and who put to death the Lord Jesus, and persecuted his disciples.

As those who dwell much on the doctrine of progression venture, in their speculations, into the future state, and contend that it is unreasonable to suppose that those who make little or no progress in divine things while they live in the flesh will enter that world on a level with those who make great improvements here, we feel justified in asking some information on other matters which seem to belong to the general subject. The doctrine requires that people enter the future state as widely different from each other as they are when they leave this. If this be allowed, and all shall progress alike in the eternal world, there must remain forever as wide a difference as there is in this world. Now, leaving out of the question the want of any Scripture testimony on this subject, and allowing our speculation ample scope, we may ask how the very best of fathers

and mothers will enjoy that state, who there shall know that there remains as wide a difference between them and their sons and daughters, whose vices have pierced their hearts with grief, and wrung from their eyes tears of sorrow, as there was in this world, and that the width of this difference will forever remain! Again, we may ask, how it will be hereafter with infants who depart this life, having made little or no progress in anything, at or about the time that their wise, experienced, and pious parents are called away? Will those little ones forever remain as distant from their parents as they were here? If all progress alike hereafter, it seems this must be the case. As this doctrine of progression, as presented by theologians of our times, rests on what is called man's free agency, it is reasonable that we should ask how any one knows how free agents will act in another state? How do we know that they will progress at all? Why may they not abuse their powers and faculties in the future world as well as in this? And even if they should make commendable improvements before they go hence, may they not

apostatize hereafter? On this scheme, how do we know that any of our race will remain forever virtuous? Another case which invites consideration is the fact, that men who, by dint of application to study, acquire much knowledge, and attain to great usefulness and large honors, sometimes outlive their faculties, and, before they die, are mere infants in knowledge. When such enter the coming state, do they occupy the low condition in which they leave this, or do they recover, in a moment, all they lost? We have known some who, for many years, lived virtuous lives, yet, before they were called away, became slaves to some vile appetite. Which of these conditions may they be entitled to when they enter the coming state?

These queries and suggestions are not presented to the public in expectation that any one will feel called on to answer them, nor with a desire to have them answered. What is desired by the writer is, that preachers and all others may do themselves the justice to take into consideration all which their doctrines involve; and, if they cannot be fully satisfied with believing

and teaching simply what God has revealed in his word, and think that they must go on to perfection by speculating on the high and the low, the great and the small, of the eternal world, they may feel under some obligation to exercise charity towards their brethren, who prize every divine grace or attainment which God bestows, not because it will distinguish them from others hereafter, but because of the sweet enjoyment it affords now, and the means of serving others, whom divine truth teaches them to love as they love themselves.

He who grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, will grow in meekness, in humility, and self-abasement; but will never draw any nourishment from an expectation of being greater than others, or of occupying a higher station in the immortal world.

WILL MEN SIN AFTER THEY ARE DEAD?

It seems that many of our Christian clergy are endeavoring to persuade people to believe in the doctrine of future punishment, or punishment in the future state, on the ground of man's continuing to sin in that state. Some of the Orthodox clergy, I believe, have taken this ground: but more of those who style themselves liberal Christians. I believe, however, that neither class profess to believe that all men will sin hereafter; but only such as they denominate the wicked, in distinction from such as they call the righteous. Yet, after all, they generally allow, that few or none attain to sinless perfection while they live in the flesh. I believe our divines who are striving to maintain future punishment, on the ground of the continuance of sin hereafter, have never thought it necessary to prove that those

whom they call the righteous will not be liable to sin hereafter, as will those whom they call the wicked, although it does not appear to be unreasonable that they should do so, or allow that all may there sin and there be punished!

In reference to the above subject, I here propose to consider what is the true meaning of St. Paul in the following passage:

"For he that is dead is freed from sin." Rom. vi. 7.

Dr. Adam Clarke, treating on this passage, finds much fault with those who so apply the words of the apostle as to make him mean *literal* death. He refers to Dr. Dodd as one who so understood the apostle. This Dr. Dodd supposed that the text means that death gives a finishing stroke to sin in Christians, when they die a literal death. Dr. Clarke, in opposing Dr. Dodd, says: "And what can be said more of the whole herd of transgressors and infidels? They cease to sin when they cease to breathe."

Thus we see the learned Dr. Dodd understood the apostle to mean that he who is literally dead is freed from sin; and the learned Dr. Clarke, in opposing such a meaning of the text, says that

"the whole herd of trangressors and infidels cease to sin when they cease to breathe."

Prof. Stuart, treating on this text, says: "This text may be regarded as a kind of general maxim, or truth, in regard to all such as die physically, or naturally. The object of the writer is to draw a comparison between the effects of *natural* death, and those of *spiritual* death: the first causes men to cease from all action, and, of course, from their transgressions; and, by analogy, we may conclude that the second, which is a death unto sin, will do as much. The maxim, in its physical sense, was probably a proverbial one among the Jews." Thus we see, that this learned professor was fully satisfied that where the apostle says, "For he that is dead is freed from sin," he means, he that is *literally* dead is freed from sin. In this, doubtless, he is right, but is he right in his explanation, in that he makes out that, as the literally dead cease from all action, and of course from their transgressions, those who are dead unto sin likewise cease from all action, and of course from their transgressions? Although his argument amounts to this, we may

reasonably doubt that he was sensible of this fact; for it is not likely that he meant that those who are dead unto sin thereby become inactive. But if he does not allow that the dead unto sin thereby cease from all action, then his *analogy* will not allow that the literally dead thereby become inactive, or do thereby cease from all action.

That the learned professor, as well as other learned commentators, are right in understanding the apostle to mean *literal* death, where he says, "For he that is dead is freed from sin," we may be satisfied by carefully observing the use which he makes of the death of Christ in the context.

Let us carefully notice how the apostle came to the argument, in which he introduces the general maxim that "he that is dead is freed from sin." In the last of the preceding chapter, he says: "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus

Christ, our Lord." The 6th chapter begins with a continuance of the subject: "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Here let us be careful to understand how the apostle makes out that he and his Christian brethren were dead to sin. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" That literal death is here meant, no one can doubt. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death;" that is, into literal death; for that is the death which Christ died. "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Here carefully observe that Christ was raised up from literal death by the glory of the Father; and the apostle argues that as believers of this most glorious truth, Christians should walk in newness of life. He adds: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Here again observe that Christ's

literal death and resurrection are meant. The apostle adds: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." How was Christ crucified? He was literally crucified; was literally dead; and in that death the body of sin was destroyed. The apostle adds, verse 7: "For he that is dead is freed from sin." Surely no one can suppose that in any instance in which Christ's crucifixion or death is mentioned, anything but literal death is intended. How, then, can we suppose the apostle meant anything but literal death when he uses a general maxim, that "he that is dead is freed from sin"? Look at what follows the 7th verse: "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Here, again, be careful. How are we dead with Christ? How was he dead? He was literally dead. Were we literally dead when he was dead?

Look back to verse 6th: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." How was the body of sin destroyed? See verses 9th and 10th: "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." When did this crucifixion of our old man take place? The apostle answers thus: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him." When he died, he died unto sin. When he died, he, "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

It would be an egregious error to suppose, that when the apostle said, "Our old man is crucified with him," he meant that the "old man" of *believers* only was crucified with Christ; for when Christ was crucified there were no believers. The apostle himself, and all his cotemporary Christians, were unbelievers when Christ was crucified. The apostle speaks of but one old

man, and the body of that old man is the body of sin, which was destroyed. For whom was the body of sin destroyed? For all for whom Christ died. Heb. ii. 9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." The death of Christ for all men, and his resurrection for their justification, together with what is necessarily embraced therein, constitute the whole of that good news, called the Gospel, which Jesus commissioned his apostles to preach to all nations. Now our believing the Gospel makes no part of it true; but gives us the enjoyments of its blessed hope, and enjoins on us all those duties and obligations which constitute a faithful discipleship of the Divine Master.

We repeat our first question: Will men sin after they are dead? We answer: — We hope not; for if he that is dead is freed from sin; if

in the death of Christ what is called our old man was crucified, and what is called the body of sin was destroyed, — we hope that in the resurrection the old man, the body of sin, will not appear. We hope that in the resurrection all will be made alive in Christ; and as the apostle says: "In that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God;" so we hope, that all who die, will die unto sin; and that all who live hereafter, will live unto God.

It is strenuously contended, that so great a change as the discontinuance of all sin at death is unreasonable; and yet those learned divines who thus contend will allow even greater changes at death in those whom they call righteous. If we ask them whether there are not, in all the Christian denominations, many who may be ranked with what they call the righteous, they are ready, at once, to allow it. But do they believe that the righteous hereafter will oppose each other, as they do here, and refuse to commune together? No, they will allow no such thing. Then will they meet with a greater change than would those in general who are

called sinners, should they cease from all sin? Will such as cannot allow so great a change at death as the discontinuance of sin, allow that the righteous hereafter will be afflicted and made exceedingly sorrowful on account of the vices and wickedness of their sons and daughters, of their fathers and mothers, of their brothers and sisters, &c.? No, they will not allow this. Then they must allow that the righteous will experience a greater change than the wicked would, should they cease from sinning. Will there, in the future state, be any such endless variety of religious opinions as are entertained in this mortal state? If not, what an astonishing change must be effected!

Our general subject seems to suggest the momentous question, whether the Scriptures anywhere represent the resurrection state as a peccable one? It must, we think, be allowed, that where Jesus spake to the Sadducees on the subject of the resurrection, in room of intimating that men in that state will sin, the contrary is reasonably inferred. Luke xx. 34—38: "And Jesus answering, said unto them, The children of this

world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him." If they are equal unto the angels, and if they all live unto God, and can die no more, it certainly favors the hope, that there will be no sinning in that immortal world. And this most precious hope seems also to derive no little support from the description of the resurrection which we find in 1 Cor. xv., beginning at the 42d verse: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first

man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Surely no one can desire any comment on the preceding quotation, to make it appear favorable to the blessed hope, that the resurrection will not bring mankind into a peccable or sinful state. Equally favorable to this most cheering hope are the words of the apostle, Rom. viii., beginning at verse 19: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Who can believe that the apostle would have used such language in describing an expectation of a state of sin for himself and all creation? If the immortal state is a peccable state, then all who exist in it may sin. What the apostle says on the subject of the hereafter state, in 2 Cor. v., shows that he believed that state to be altogether desirable. Begin with verse 1: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that

are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

It is worthy of notice, that the resurrection state is uniformly represented as a state to be hoped for; and never, in a single instance, represented as a state to be dreaded by any portion of the human race. How very comforting are the following words; see Heb. vi., beginning at verse 17: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast; and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec." Who, let us ask, of any denomination of Christians among us, does not stand in need of the strong consolation which the foregoing passage seems to afford? Who does

not need that hope, and the consolations of that hope, which is an anchor of the soul, and which enters into that within the vail, whither our high priest has entered? It would seem that a moment's survey of mankind in this mortal, sinful state, would wean any sensible man or woman from all its fading glory. Who can survey all the oppressions, all the injustice, all the slavery, all the wickedness, all the pain and sickness, together with the certain prospect of soon parting with all the fond endearments of life, and of descending into the silence of the tomb, and feel no need of that blessed hope of an immortality, where death shall be swallowed up in victory, and tears wiped from all faces?

What can be more inconsistent than to argue, as some do, that a belief that the resurrection state is free from sin is dangerous to the interests of piety and virtue? Can a belief that men will continue to sin in the immortal world render any service to the interests of piety and virtue in this world? In what possible way can it have such an effect? Will it encourage the pious and virtuous to be faithful in all religious and moral

duty, to believe their neighbors will be wicked and vicious hereafter? If such a belief can do the righteous no good, let us ask if it can be of any benefit to the vicious and impious? What deception is it which leads the wicked on now in the ways of sin? The true answer is, they promise themselves enjoyment therein. If so, should they believe that in the immortal world they shall walk in the same way, would such a belief tend to reform them now? This is unreasonable. As far as a belief can serve the interests of religion and moral virtue here on earth, it must be a faith which works by love. Love which is the fulfilling of the law is love to God and our fellow-creatures. Standing in this light, let us consider the following question: — Suppose people, everywhere, were now fully convinced, and fully believed, that in the world to come all hearts will be filled with love to God, and to each other, and that no hatred will be known there, is it reasonable to suppose that such a belief would tend to cause people now to love God and one another less? No supposition could be more unreasonable. An effect exactly contrary would

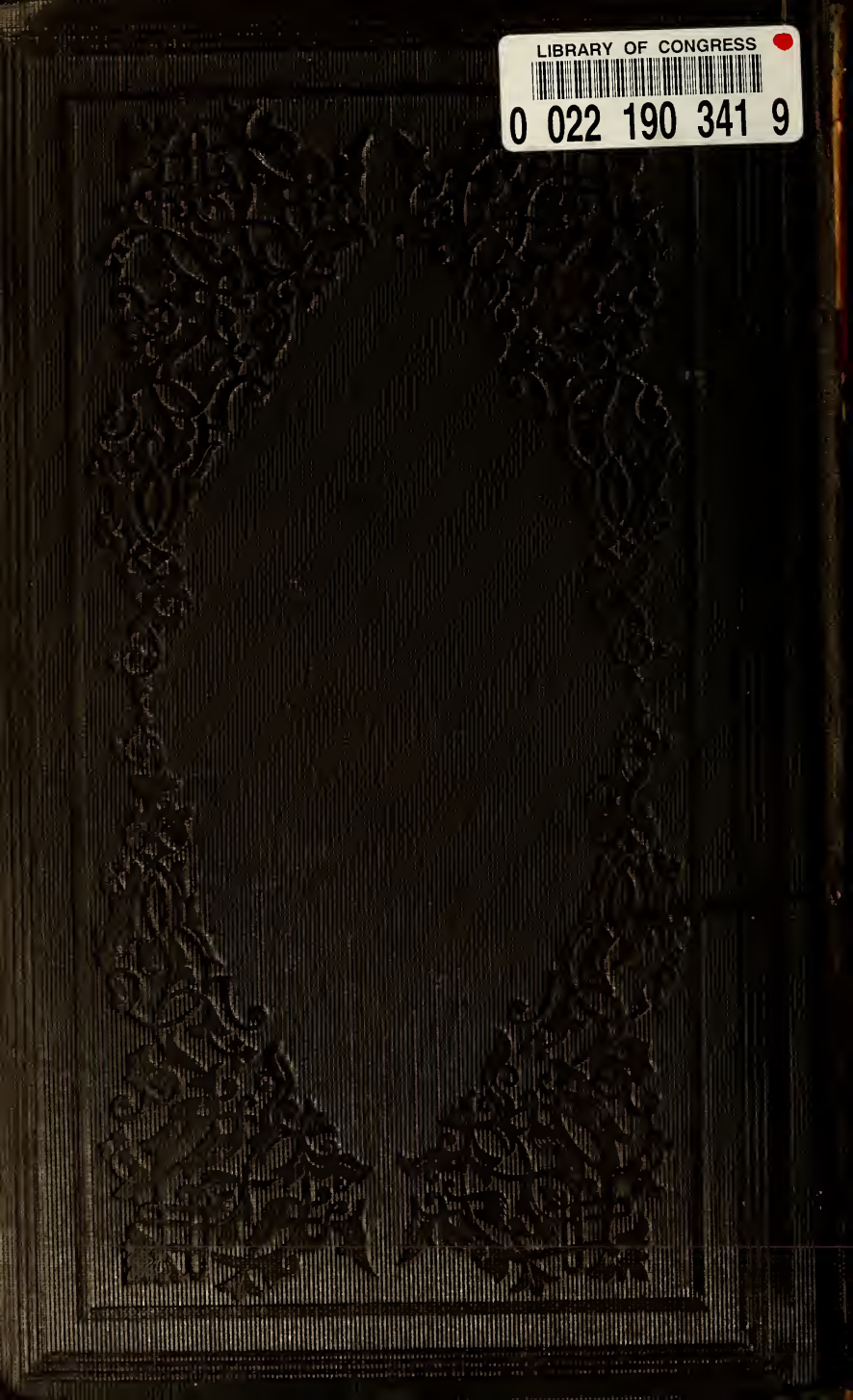
necessarily follow. If we hope soon to be with Christ, and to be like him, and if we steadily exercise this hope, shall we not, by its benign influence, endeavor to keep ourselves from all moral pollution? See 1 John iii. 2, 3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

That speculative doctrine, for which many now contend, that teaches a restoration from sin and condemnation in some future age or ages, in the future, immortal state, seems to be entirely without foundation in the word of God. And if we bring it to the test of sound reason, how can it be supported? It must allow that man's constitution, in the immortal world, will be a peccable constitution; and if so, what can be relied on to prevent the continuance of sin as long as that immortal state shall endure? We read of but two constitutions of man in the Scriptures: the mortal and the immortal; the earthly and the

heavenly. The Scriptures speak of sin in the earthly state, but never speak of it in the immortal.

Again we recur to our question: Will men sin after they are dead? In addition to what has already been offered to answer our question, we refer to Heb. ii. 14, 15: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." If the tempter is destroyed by the death of the body, we have good ground to hope that sin will not continue. It is believed that the history of sin begins and ends in flesh and blood; and surely we believe that there is no Scripture account of it out of our mortal constitution.

We are sensible that the views here presented to our readers are widely different from the opinions of the most of Christians. And true it is, that the doctors of the church and theological schools teach doctrines altogether opposed to the precious hope which we have here presented.


LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 022 190 341 9